

Charter Helicopter Flightseeing Study Materials

- **Community and Business Interviews**
- **Public Meeting Report**
- **Summary of Previously Produced Documents on Helicopter Flightseeing and Tourism**
- **Alternative Methods for Reaching Remote Sites**

Produced for the
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, Washington



July 2006



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

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June 30, 2006

Dear Interested Party:

The Federal Highway Administration, Western Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-WFLHD), U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service), City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ), and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), and the representatives of each of these agencies acting together as the Social, Economic, and Environmental Team (SEE Team), have completed a final report, which has been delivered to Rod Swope, City Manager, City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ). City staff asked the SEE Team to undertake a study to assess current public opinion regarding impacts of charter helicopters on the residents and businesses of Juneau.

The study culminated with a public meeting, held April 18, 2006, at Centennial Hall. All comments received at and following the meeting have been incorporated into the report that has been delivered to CBJ. The report will also be available to the general public on FHWA's web site at <http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/projects/alaska.htm> by August, 2006.

If you have any questions about the process followed, or the report itself (your comments will be forwarded to CBJ, as WFLHD's involvement has concluded), please contact me at 360-619-7723, email me at steve.zaske@fhwa.dot.gov, or write to me at the following address:

Steve Zaske
Environmental Specialist, AK/WA
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661-3801

Sincerely yours,


Steven D. Zaske
Environmental Specialist



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Public Meeting Brochure – April 18, 2006

Juneau Charter Helicopter Flightseeing Study Materials

Acronyms

ADOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
AHFP&TSNC	Ad Hoc Float Plane and Tour Ship Noise Committee
CBJ	City and Borough of Juneau
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
EIS	environmental impact statement
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
Forest Service	U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service
JFNP	Juneau Fly Neighborly Program
JTP	Juneau Tourism Partnership
mph	miles per hour
NWCA	Northwest Cruiseship Association
SEL	Sound exposure level
TAC	Tourism Advisory Committee
TBMP	Tourism Best Management Practices
WFL	Western Federal Lands

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Western Federal Lands (WFL), U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service), City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ), and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) comprise the Social, Economic, and Environmental Team (SEE Team), originally established to select sites for new satellite heliports in the Juneau area. Initial efforts to move the original project forward resulted in significant public opposition to siting heliport(s) at either of the locations recommended in prior noise studies conducted by CBJ in the area. CBJ, based on this extensive public opposition, requested that the earmark funds be used to step back from conducting an environmental study on the Montana Creek and Dupont Sites. City staff asked the SEE Team to undertake a study to assess current public opinion regarding impacts of charter helicopter on the residents and business of Juneau.

Activities

The SEE Team decided to conduct a 10-month public opinion study of helicopter charter flightseeing effects on residents of CBJ. The process involved the following activities:

- Interviews asking the same questions of the following individuals
 - Steve Boch, FHWA, Alaska Division Office
 - Bruce Botelho, Mayor of Juneau
 - Pete Griffin, Juneau District Ranger, Forest Service
 - Tim Haugh, FHWA, Alaska Division Office
 - Andy Hughes, ADOT&PF SE Region Planning Chief
 - Merrill Sanford, Juneau Assembly
 - Keith Simila, Forest Service, Region 10 Director of Engineering and Aviation Management
 - Rod Swope, Juneau City Manager
 - Steve Turner, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Literature review and summaries
- Research and summaries of methods used to transport tourists to remote sites
- Three SEE Team meetings to present research and discuss public involvement options
- Interviews of business representatives and community residents
- Public meeting on April 18, 2006

Process

To ensure understanding of the issue, city officials, charter helicopter operators, and state and federal officials were contacted in April and May and asked a series of questions. Their responses were discussed during the SEE Team meetings and used as background

for determining public outreach activities. The next step was researching and writing about how tourists were transported to remote sites in other parts of the world. Reports concerning charter helicopter flightseeing noise in the area were reviewed and summarized for inclusion in the final report on the study. The effort included interviewing representatives of the business community (i.e., helicopter charter operators, the Juneau Chamber of Commerce's Chief Executive Officer, and tour ship representatives) and members of the residential community (i.e., Collaboration Juneau members and random members of the general public). FHWA also produced a brochure describing the issue.

Public Perceptions

Over the course of the study, it became clear that the tourism industry believes it has addressed most of the issues involved in charter helicopter flightseeing through its Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) Group. This group meets several times a year, outlines issues it believes will arise regarding tourism in general, publishes the issues in the *Juneau Empire*, along with call-in telephone numbers, then acts upon any calls it receives from residents. Helicopter company representatives stated that the number of calls they receive has declined steadily over the last five years, and they attribute this drop to their TBMP efforts.

Residents who were interviewed had some different observations. Several indicated that the decline in phone calls is due to lack of response on the part of the CBJ Assembly or the TBMP Group. To them, it is no longer worthwhile calling because nothing comes of their efforts. Charter helicopter flightseeing noise as reported or commented on by the public has a negative effect on those residents who live under the current flight paths, and they specifically mentioned low flights on cloudy days, although they also noted that safety has to be an issue for helicopter pilots and passengers.

Over the course of the study, the question of why FHWA was the lead agency was asked fairly frequently. Initially, FHWA was designated as the lead because the project was established to select a location for a new heliport. That would have involved building a road and possibly modifying existing highway to reach the new heliport. For this reason, FHWA was thought to be the appropriate federal agency to manage the funds allocated for initial studies to select the best site.

Public Meeting Highlights

The 10-month study culminated with a public meeting held on April 18, 2006. Each of the members of the SEE Team had representatives at the meeting to answer questions and respond to public comments. Approximately 48 people attended, in addition to FHWA, Forest Service, and CBJ staff members. Collaboration Juneau was also invited to host an information table at the meeting.

Public comments recorded at the meeting indicated that charter helicopter flightseeing noise is still an issue for residents of Juneau. There were significantly more negative than positive comments taken both at the public meeting and over the course of the study. Many attendees said moving ERA off Douglas Island to the airport area (where the rest of the

helicopter charter operators are located) would help reduce the noise levels for residents of Douglas Island, as well as city dwellers on the other side of the Gastineau Channel.

Some residents noted that the TBMPs developed by the charter helicopter operators and tour ship operators have helped reduce some of the annoyance for residents in some areas. Many residents said that it was within the purview of CBJ to ask the Forest Service to cut the numbers of flights, the hours, and the days of the week to lessen the effects of charter helicopter flight noise. Several commenters mentioned developing a new heliport site as a potential solution for charter flightseeing noise. Others said they did not want a new heliport site, particularly if it would be constructed close to their residences.

A few residents said that noise was not an issue for them. They thought that charter helicopter flightseeing was an excellent way for people to see the Juneau Ice Field, and they noted that this experience was not only unique, but would create the memory of a lifetime for tourists who could take advantage of the trip.

Summary

This report represents the culmination of the activities undertaken during this study. As stated above, the goal of this study was to capture current public and business perceptions regarding what effect charter helicopter flights have on the greater community of Juneau. Through this study, it is well documented that the public believes charter helicopter flightseeing is a significant issue for residents of certain areas in Juneau, and these impacted residents look to the Juneau Assembly to take action to mitigate this impact. On the other hand, the tourism industry believes it has taken corrective actions to mitigate the issues, participating in many various public outreach efforts (Collaboration Juneau, TBMP, and this study) to continue to find additional compromises to ease the public concern over such issues.

The bottom line for residents in or around the flight path is that charter helicopter flightseeing noise is a significant issue. WFL has documented current public opinions and has listed the ideas all entities have suggested as additional ways to mitigate this issue.

WFL has fulfilled its commitment under the terms of the project agreement. Submittal of this report signifies completion of the agreed-upon process established during the SEE Team meetings. WFL intends to de-obligate the funds from its office and return them to Federal Highways Headquarters in Washington, D.C. With this action, WFL considers its participation in this project complete.

Community and Business Interviews

September 2005 through April 2006



Community and Business Interviews Conducted From September 2005 through April 2006

September 30, 2005—Helicopter Companies

We met with all four helicopter firms in Juneau and Douglas. The individuals we talked with were Tim McDonnell, Mitch Horton, Nate Williamson, Tim Cudney, Bob Engelbrecht, Jason Kalbeth, Ken Dewey, and Jim Wilson. Mike Traffalis and Kurt Loftsgaarden joined Karen Cantillon for the discussion with Jim Wilson. Mike led that discussion.

All the individuals expressed many of the same concerns. At first they were quite concerned about the process, but with discussion, some thought that there was some value to aspects of reopening discussions. The positive comments involved summarizing previous activities and reports, and considering new ideas.

The helicopter operators suggested several new contacts they thought we should make. They include the following:

- FAA Flight Standards Office
- Lorraine Kopler, Juneau Convention & Visitors' Bureau
- Bulk fuel suppliers
- Juneau Chamber of Commerce
- Montana Creek Gun Club and Skeet Shooters' Club

Several of the helicopter operators wanted to know why we were revisiting the issue. They all mentioned that the number of telephone calls had dropped over the last few years, and they attributed that to their new air routes and flying at higher elevations. They said that they receive phone calls from the same individuals consistently. Jim Wilson thought that spending money on this issue again was a waste of time. He suggested that FHWA look into reallocating the funds to another project. Mike explained that this may not be possible and that the funds would probably go back to Congress for reallocation. Mitch Horton and others mentioned that people are considering a site near Spaulding Meadows, below the ridge and down the hill in a saddle visible from the rifle range. It is below the meadows, off the beaten path, away from large areas of human population, and easier to construct a road to this area. There may also be other alternative sites that could be considered. Jim Wilson indicated that he would not move, regardless of where any potential new site would be located.

One individual is a member of Collaboration Juneau. Other helicopter operators had reservations about the group, but they were willing to follow the process through. They all asked to be kept in the loop regarding any reports.

September 30, 2005—Donna Pierce—CBJ

We met with Donna Pierce of the CBJ. Donna reviewed the history of the project with us, and she said that the city intends to address the issue.

We asked her about the decision-makers who influence how many charter flights occur and where they fly. She said that CBJ had hired an aviation expert to provide a legal review of the city's jurisdiction regarding helicopter flights, and he indicated that CBJ cannot limit aircraft in flight. She said that CBJ cannot collect sales tax on flightseeing per se. The city can collect sales tax only for that portion of the trip when tourists are on the ground. The tour portion only is taxable.

She suggested that we speak with John Hansen, Northwest Cruiseship Association (NWCA), in Vancouver, B.C., 604-681-9515, and Don Habeger, the local liaison for NWCA, at 907-789-5441.

She mentioned the Baker study and said that they had hired a noise expert, Paul Dunholter.

She also suggested that we speak with Rosemary Haagevig (former Juneau Assembly member) and Connie Munro (formerly active in Collaboration Juneau), both still active in the community.

She discussed Hoonah and the Point Sofia whale watching as tourist activities.

September 30, 2005—McKie Campbell—Baker Noise Study

McKie Campbell managed the Baker Noise Study as a consultant. He said that it was done quickly and "on the cheap."

He mentioned a few possible sites for new helipads. Eaglecrest would be one choice from which helicopters could fly north over Taku Inlet and to the Taku Glacier, and the Herbert or Eagle Glaciers as well. McKie pointed out, however, that Eaglecrest is a higher elevation site, and helicopters would not be able to use it when they have to stay below 1,500 feet due to cloud ceilings. Lena Loop, past the ball field, was another possibility, but it is quite far out the road for transporting tourists to the helipad. McKie thought that splitting the venues would alleviate some of the noise issues by diffusing the noise. We also talked about the Spaulding Meadows concept (per the suggestion of CBJ) after discussions with Temsco Helicopters, Inc.; and he thought that was a good prospect.

McKie thought that Montana Creek would have a more significant sound issue than traffic issue. He thought that the Dupont site would be much quieter for Thane residents either than they thought or relative to Montana Creek. He said that boat transport might be an option, and also a tourism enhancement, but that a road would be needed for maintenance purposes. McKie said that there are cabins past Thane, reachable only by boat. The development is called "Lucky Me," and there might be a slight increase in noise if the helipad were at Dupont.

September 30, 2005—Collaboration Juneau Afternoon Meeting

We met with Mala Regis, Paula Terrill, and Margo Waring, all members of Collaboration Juneau. All three have been affected by helicopter noise, although Margo has moved and no longer experiences any disturbance. They all expressed concern over whether two sets of meetings on the same topic (Collaboration Juneau's meetings and our meetings with the public) would confuse people. We talked about ways to prevent this from happening.

September 30, 2005—Collaboration Juneau Steering Committee Evening Meeting

We were asked to attend the steering committee meeting of Collaboration Juneau on Thursday evening. The attendees were Larry Spencer, Don Habeger, Dave Hanna, Mala Regis, Paula Terrell, Tim McDonnell, Maria Gladziszewski, Linda Augustine, Rick Suarez, Mike Traffalis, and Karen Cantillon. Collaboration Juneau representatives discussed possible intersecting points in the work efforts, and Mike indicated that he would go back to the SEE Team and let them know that we would continue with our interviews, summarize the previous reports, and might attend Collaboration Juneau's meetings, but as observers, rather than active presenters. The Collaboration Juneau mission encompasses all aspects of tourism, and our effort is limited to charter helicopter flights and their effects. There was much discussion regarding the need to refrain from double-teaming the citizens of Juneau.

November 4, 2005—Meeting with John Hansen—NWCA

John gave us some background regarding how NWCA got involved with community relations on behalf of the cruise ship industry. He then suggested that we talk with Linda Huston in Seattle, as well as Kirby Day and Don Habeger in Juneau. We told him we had meetings scheduled with Kirby and Don on November 7, 2005. He also suggested that we speak with Drew Green, a local stevedoring company representative, as well as food, beverage, fresh fish, and Alaska amber suppliers.

John represents eight tourship companies that ferry 90 to 95 percent of the tourists visiting Juneau. His firm is 20 years old and originally provided screening services for passengers, for example, security, metal detectors, x-raying baggage, and screening passports, visas, and other documents. This activity evolved into port and dock development activities, then that led to tours and their promotion. His firm now works with communities, performs community relations, lobbies legislatures, and deals with problems and irritations communities experience related to tourists visiting them. He said that his whole philosophy is to address local concerns to keep the industry healthy.

He said that Juneau ranks very high as a desirable destination city. While charter helicopter flights are costly, they are often the highlight of peoples' trips to Juneau. There are 120 different tour options offered to cruiseship passengers disembarking in Juneau. The general pattern is that the ships come in early in the morning, then leave late in the afternoon or early evening. People spend approximately 10 hours, and they usually take two tours, one of which is often shopping.

We discussed the attempt to develop a new helipad site, and John said that the broad objective was to minimize disturbances in the community. He did not really know much about the two prospective sites.

He told us that his firm does statewide polling on tourist activities, using a firm out of Washington, D.C., the Cromm Group. He told us that he would send us a summary of their findings, but the basic message was that people did not distinguish between the effects caused by 700,000 tourists and those created by 900,000 tourists. The curve was basically the same for both numbers in surveys taken several years apart.

November 7, 2005—Meeting with Kirby Day—Princess Cruises and Tours

We met with Kirby Day on November 7, 2005. Kirby said that he would prefer no change in the current charter helicopter Forest Service permit, but he would like yearly incremental increases in numbers of flights to continue. He mentioned that the permit he thought would be reevaluated in approximately two years. He thought that the process should allow for some increase in flights as the number of visitors increases, while monitoring community feedback through statistically valid methods. He mentioned that the number of complaints has been declining. He said that charter helicopter flights are an issue for those who are affected, regardless of the size of the group or where they live. He thinks that the Forest Service should continue to manage as it is currently managing. Helicopter operators are trying to make changes. There are, however, still people bothered by helicopter noise.

Kirby cited TBMP work and the McDowell group's surveys in 1998 and 2003. He said that from one survey to the next, there were an additional 300,000 tourists, and the community demonstrated more tolerance for increased tourism in 2003 when compared to 1998. He thinks this is because the impacts are being managed better. There have been infrastructure changes using the head tax for funding, and they have decreased downtown traffic on some days. He thought that the McDowell group should do another survey to assess current opinion. Kirby noted that this suggestion of another statistically valid survey has been funded by the head tax, and the Assembly will likely commission such a survey in the fall of 2006.

When asked about a new helipad below Spaulding Meadows, he said that the time involved in getting from ship to pads would be the issue. The helicopter companies build in approximately 45 minutes for preflight and transfer. He said that adding another half an hour to the tour may not be a big deal, but flightseeing companies would also have to weigh in on that type of change.

He suggested that we talk with food service suppliers and fuel suppliers, and he said that Delta Western sells fuel to the busses that transport tourists to the helicopter sites and to the glacier. He suggested that we talk with Bob Jacobson with Wings of Alaska because he has a good grounding in noise issues in Juneau, even though he deals with fixed wing aircraft.

Kirby said that the tourism industry wants to try to keep residents as happy as they can. They do not want to be regulated by CBJ any more than they are, if they can avoid it. He said that they do everything they possibly can to minimize impacts, and he thinks that they have done their best, made a difference, and are still focused on improving. The only

other choice for them would be to reduce their business model to an extent that noise is minimized, but that could cause a company to go out of business.

November 7, 2005—Meeting with Don Habeger—Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.

We met with Don Habeger on November 7, 2005. Don was also asked about a helipad below Spaulding Meadows. He said that he is in favor of any continued effort to find satellite heliports. He thought that it might remove enough traffic to make downtown residents happy. He discussed the several areas that are impacted and said that those around ERA were certainly included. He said that a few flight patterns that come out of the airport area have affected constituencies, as well.

He said that the argument is that if you increase access, there are effects that will have to be managed, and that is a new dialogue. In the best of all possible worlds, he would like an industry that can grow at the same rate as the community. He thought a saturation point could be reached at which the community thinks there is enough tourism. The community should convey that message to the tourist industry at that point. If the tourist numbers are growing in proportion to the community, that would be fine. He said that tourism has to be a joint venture. He thought that the community should assess where it is, where it is going, and what it can do. He thought that summarizing past activities is a worthwhile process for this effort.

We asked him about Collaboration Juneau, of which he is a member. He said he thought that CBJ hoped Collaboration Juneau would assess community opinion, would move faster, and would come to some resolution. If you had the stakeholders in a room and gave them the tools and resources to come up with conclusions, that could be taken to the assembly, and the assembly would have the grounds to act, based on reported stakeholder opinion. He said that there were people on one side of the table who want no growth, and industry was on the other side of the table, wanting to continue to grow. He said that he now has less confidence than he did that Collaboration Juneau can come up with a compromise that will be workable enough to present to the Assembly, but he will continue to work towards that goal.

February 23, 2006—Cathie Roemmich and Karen Hansen—Juneau Chamber of Commerce

Cathie Roemmich is newly appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the Juneau Chamber of Commerce. For this reason, she asked that Karen Hansen, who serves on the Chamber of Commerce board, be included in the interview as Karen has in-depth knowledge of the history of flight seeing in Juneau. Cathie indicated that how communities manage cruise ships dictates how they do as far as visitor dollars that flow into and out of the towns. She thinks that flight seeing is something residents live around, and she said that the industry has been very good to Juneau. She felt that most people have had the option to decide whether they live near heliports. Cathie said that she intended to go to the Collaboration Juneau meeting.

Karen Hansen says that flight seeing brings in a significant amount of money to the community, and it is a popular tour for people to enjoy. She felt there were more people not bothered by the noise than those who are and she also felt most Juneau residents

would not want the flight-seeing companies' business damaged by limiting flights. Karen thought the Sheep Creek concept was worth pursuing and felt with the increased traffic the Thane road and infrastructure (possibility of city water and sewer) would be upgraded, which would be good for the neighborhood. Karen also mentioned the improvements made to the deHavilland Otters that operate flight-seeing tours from downtown Juneau. Engines were converted to turbine engines, which are much quieter than the original equipment, thanks to a low interest loan from the city. This has been well received by many residents of West Juneau, Douglas, and downtown Juneau.

Karen also said that she lives under the flight path of helicopters that take flight-seeing visitors to the Juneau Ice Field. She said that it can be a bit noisy, but it doesn't bother her. She thinks it's wonderful that the visitors are having a wonderful experience, the employees have jobs, and the companies are making money. Often these flight-seeing dollars allow those same companies to operate year-round. She said there could be up to five or six helicopters every hour some days, but they become unnoticeable to her unless someone points it out. She added that the operators have made voluntary concessions to limit their tour flights from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. She said that some people get confused about what is a tour flight and what is a charter flight, and they complain about any operation – It could be a medivac or another commercial flight that doesn't fall into the limited tour flight hours. She added that some people might truly have more sensitive ears, so they are more affected by noise.

Cathie says the noise does not bother her, and she indicated that she didn't feel the need to investigate before buying her home. She suggested that we speak with Rosemary Hagevig, who heads the Chamber Tourism Committee, and Karen Hansen said that was a good idea. Karen thought we should talk with Lorene Palmer at the Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Karen also recommended that we talk with Susan Bell at McDowell and Associates, as well as Sue Douglas, who live on Thane Road.

March 22, 2006—Rosemary Hagevig—Former Juneau Assembly Member

Rosemary Hagevig formerly served on the Juneau Assembly and is currently the head of the Chamber Tourism Committee. She lives in Douglas, close to ERA's facility, and she said that helicopter flightseeing noise does not bother her. She views the flights as a wonderful way for people to experience the glacier first-hand. She also mentioned the extraordinary efforts the helicopter companies have gone through and the measures they have put in place to reroute their coaches over less inhabited areas to avoid disturbing the maximum number of Juneau residents.

Rosemary noted that the TBMP Group meets periodically, determines tourism issues to address, signs an agreement, and publishes it in the Juneau Empire, along with contact numbers, and addresses issues as soon as they come in. This group has won national awards for its efforts to resolve citizen complaints quickly.

Public Meeting

April 18, 2006



Public Meeting Report

April 18, 2006

Project Name: Draft - Juneau Charter Helicopter Flightseeing Study Materials

Meeting Date: April 18, 2005

Time: 5PM to 8PM

Location: Centennial Hall, Juneau, Alaska

Presenter: Michael Traffalis, Design Operations Engineer, FHWA

Attendees:

- FHWA
- Forest Service
- heliport operators
- Collaboration Juneau
- CBJ
- tour ship operators
- Baker Study representative
- Community members

Subject: Public Meeting Summary

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1.0 Overview

On April 18, 2006, the FHWA, WFL, hosted a public meeting to give Juneau residents an opportunity to review materials developed during a year-long study. Michael Traffalis, Design Operations Engineer, gave a brief overview of the project and explained the setup of the room. He invited people to visit stations hosted by representatives of FHWA, the Forest Service, heliport operators, Collaboration Juneau, CBJ, Baker Study representatives, and tour ship operators. In addition, a court recorder was available to take oral testimony for individuals who did not want to submit a written or emailed statement. Forty-eight people signed in as attending the meeting. The meeting lasted approximately three hours.

Mr. Traffalis told attendees that there were maps posted behind the Forest Service table (Figures 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3). He asked them to locate their residences, then place a red, yellow, or green dot over their houses to indicate whether noise was a problem, a mild annoyance, or not an issue for them (Figures 2-4, 2-5, and 2-6). There was also a poster illustrating additional ways to address charter helicopter flightseeing noise (Figure 2-7) and a brochure explaining the process and the reasons for the public meeting (attachment). Several individuals placed more than one red dot, including such areas as hiking trails and other places where they found noise an annoyance.

2.0 Flip Chart Comments

The flip chart comments below were recorded verbatim. The oral comments were transcribed and punctuated for ease in reading them. This report also includes a table of attendees.

My red dot means noise is still a problem. It does not mean build another heliport and move around or increase the problem.

Suggestion to place a heliport at the Mendenhall Glacier vicinity of visitors center.

Response: Do not ruin one of Juneau's most pristine and treasured spots. The tourists and locals on the ground deserve better. No heliport on Montana Creek or near the Visitor's Center. Do not spend the \$. Contact your Fed. Delegation.

Just build a road to it.

See above comment—build a road beyond the M.G.V.C. for a new heliport. This will work best with a flight plan over the Glacier, not Montana Creek.

TAKE ACTION—This has been discussed for YEARS!! Too long!!!

1997—Flightseeing hrs of ops?

Assembly should become involved and pro-active in working w/ERA to find some way to move them from N. Douglas

1007—Reconsider hours of operation—move up 1 hr? 2 hrs?

Build a road from the visitor center up west side to the top of the glacier. Take passengers by electric bus to a heliport at the end of that road.

Remember the glacier is retreating! How much longer will it even be visible from G.V.C? Let's plan now for 5-10 years out!

Dirigibles!

Measure noise levels at nearby residences at proposed heliport sites w/ some test runs-take-off and landings 1 to 3 helicopters in the tests.

If a NEPA document is produced, please write an appropriate purpose and need statement.

3.0 Written Comment Forms

Tim Arnold

Resident

3136 Pioneer Ave.
Juneau AK 99801

907-463-3537

Comments: I think the tourism industry is doing a FANTASTIC job at trying to appease the needs of business, tourism, and the citizens. I do not feel that a small vocal minority of residents should be allowed to have detrimental effects to business.

To determine the scope of the problem, the Assembly should actually poll the public (statistically valid), not rely on meetings dominated by people that are obsessed against helicopter traffic.

By the way, the red, yellow, green dots on the map thing didn't work. One person put more than 10 red dots, and a lot of people followed with multiple dots. Thank you.

Steve Behnke

Resident

4545 Thane Road

srbehnke@ak.net

Comments: Helicopter flightseeing, at current levels, is a noisy intrusion into my family's life, particularly in combination with frequent float plane traffic along Gastineau Channel. It regularly makes it difficult to carry on a conversation in our front yard during the summer.

The voluntary measures, such as altitude and route adjustments leave somewhat reduced the intrusion in recent years, although they also make deviating from them more noticeable, as when ERA helicopters swing south toward Mt. Hawthorne instead of going up Sheep Creek Valley, or when they fly lower than usual.

I and many of my neighbors believe that downtown and Thane residents are bearing a disproportionate share of the cumulative negative impacts of helicopter flightseeing and other tourism development. We have noise from cruise ship, helicopter and float plane traffic during much of the day. We experience increasing delays and unsafe driving conditions every time we pass through the lower South Franklin Street area. We also experience increasingly unsafe driving conditions on narrow, non-shouldered Thane Road as the number of tourism-related buses and other vehicles increases, along with the risk of hitting runners, hikers and walkers who use Thane Road.

For these reasons we are highly skeptical of the remote heliport concept, which would shift even more negative impacts into our neighborhood, particularly more bus traffic, and probably (if DuPont or another Thane site were used) major disruptions to the quiet peaceful character of our residential area at the end of Thane Road, such as increased traffic.

Frank Bergstrom
Self/resident

PO Box 22909
Juneau

907-523-1995
aki2000@gsi.net

Becky Carls

3001 Fritz Cove Rd.
Juneau, Alaska 99801
907-789-0947

Helicopter landings and takeoffs are an industrial land use, and should be regulated by the city like other industrial uses.

Comments: Juneau should give full support to the tourism industry in general and flightseeing in particular. Additional flights and routes should be considered. Anything to help promote this community and the cruise industry, which we are fortunate to host.

The calculation of numbers of folks impacted vs. number of folks enjoying a flight should be done on a flight by flight basis, not the gross numbers of people. That would leave you with many more folks negatively impacted by each flight than the number (5 or 6) who are enjoying the flight. It would be a closer estimate of the negative impact, because we hear the noise, over and over and over and over and over ***ALL DAY LONG, ALL SUMMER LONG!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!***

Helicopter Sightseeing Effects

A. Direct effects of helos

Noise

Lack of privacy

Can't hear the birds

Can't hear normal speech outside

People have moved away from Juneau

B. Indirect effects

FAA moved the helicopter flight paths over my neighborhood without any public input

Helicopter flightpaths stay there ALL YEAR LONG

Single engine/small planes also now "stray" from "the cut" over Mendenhall Peninsula to the north over my neighborhood sometimes in conflict with the helicopters they are supposed to avoid by the new flightpath.

C. What makes the noise worse

Damp weather...more helicopters over my neighborhood, lower flightpaths, and noise is louder and longer lasting with higher humidity and temperature inversions.

Turning directly toward my house

Flying a bit lower

Flying slower

Curving inward instead of a more 90 degree turn as head toward the peninsula.

D. What makes the noise less

Dry weather...fewer flights this way and noise not as long lasting

Dense fog...no flights!

Flying higher

Flying at “tree top” height makes the noise travel less far decreasing noise further away (but I’ll bet it is REALLY awful for those who would live right under that!)

More distance from homes

Flying faster so time of noise exposure is less (like fixed wing flights)

Fewer flights

At my house...if the flights went due west and did not turn toward Auke Mountain until they were across from it (a 90 degree turn) the noise would be less (a few have done that now and then).

If helos flew higher, faster, that would help NOW...why can’t they just climb to 2000 feet over the airport before heading out?

NO HELICOPTERS flying near homes

The most recent noise study was lacking in many respects. Problems in my area:

A. Selected site for Fritz Cove area (my neighborhood) not representative.

1. Other side of “the cut” so flights curve away from the site.
2. Lower elevation than at my home
3. My home was volunteered as a site and was about to have the instruments installed there, but political maneuvering once again prevented the study from being conducted at the most noise impacted locations, I tried to bring up the weaknesses in the study but was ignored.

B. Site surveyed only on a sunny day

1. Fewer flights
2. Helos were flying higher
3. Drier air also results in lower noise levels

C. Proof that my neighborhood is noisier than study showed (a copy of a recorded day of noise is attached)

1. A CBJ employee overseeing the blasting at the new rock quarry in Auke Bay area was shocked at the noise level when he came to my house to take a reading (using the same model instrument that I use). It was louder at my home than at homes right by the quarry.
2. A gentleman who lives under the jet flight path dropped by in the summer just as a flock of helos was going over. His jaw dropped. He was shocked at the noise level and discovered the speech interruption was much worse than at this home down the road.

Re: Lack of complaints on Tourism Hotline

- #1 The tour companies ALL encourage the public to call them directly with complaints.
- #2 My understanding is that this is merely a way to complain about deviations from the helos “fly neighborly” routes. But if you want me to complain every time I am bothered by the overflight of a helicopter, I will be more than happy to oblige! Yes, the noise is still obnoxious. The tourism hotline was not operational for many weeks a few years ago and folks found it to be ineffective. Our options are to keep complaining and have ongoing stress from that or try to avoid it by not being at home as much as possible, which is what I do. I would rather be home in the summer, I would rather work a part-time job, but it is just too annoying to be home. Folks are trying to be patient and work it through, but this does not mean it is not still an issue!!!!

Many people negatively impacted by the noise have moved.

A possible solution:

The problem is caused by an activity permitted by the Forest Service, but the activity originates on CBJ land and crosses private property. Helicopter flightseeing tours should all originate and end on Forest Service property.

How bad is it???

Measured levels of 58-70 decibels and more.

Bad days only 10 minutes with helicopter noise, average day is 20, in an hour.

Big dump trucks going down my road are about as noise as a helicopter but take much less time to stop making noise. So I believe the calculation was the current level of helicopter noise is like 120 dump trucks going up and down my road in an hour!

General Statement:

Helicopter flight path changed w/o public input. To begin with, before we purchased our homesite, we checked the aircraft noise levels. We are not stupid! The noise levels were acceptable at that time with the flight paths in place then. Shortly after we built our home, the FAA moved the helicopter flight path the 1/2 mile from our home (which is at an elevation of about 150 feet on Mendenhall Peninsula). There was not public input leading up to this change; it just happened. The result has been increased noise during the summer tourist season, as well as increased noise the rest of the year because the helicopters use that path all year. Once the helicopters were broken away from the previously dictated flightpath across the peninsula, the small fixed wing craft also started crossing the peninsula directly over our neighborhood, sometimes in opposition to the helicopters. We have no relief in our neighborhood at all. Most folks in our neighborhood purchased their homes based on what the aircraft noise levels were before they were changed. Most other neighborhoods with an impact from the tourist flights at least get relief in the winter.

We get none!

Nearly constant noise (see attached list of one day's noise level recordings and number of flights). We are in the middle of a "merry-go-round" of noise all day, everyday, all summer long! Few minutes per hour are without helicopter noise. Typical measured noise levels are 60 and go up to 70 decibels and more. Noise study was done at a lower elevation by the water and on the outside of the curve. I come home from work and instead of being able to relax in my garden, I am bombarded by noise. I can last about an hour before I throw in the towel, go into the house, shut the windows, and turn up the stereo. If I wear

ear protection while I am outside to avoid hearing the copters, I can't hear the birds, and even worse, I can't hear the bears (I did have one sneak up on me once and I didn't notice it until it was clacking its jaws together about 20 feet from me).

July 2nd at Becky Carl's house recorded in garden by best rhubarb patch. All outbound unless otherwise reported. Average afternoon; weather good.

2000 2:13:15 - 2:15:40 1 helo 58-60 db
2:20:30 - 2:24:09 3 helos, one was 70 db, one was 62 db one was between, no meas.
2:25:15 - 26:30 returned behind
2:33:20 - 34:20 returned behind
2:34:40 - 38:40 2 LOW helos at 66 db, 1 at 62 db, 2 at 64 db going out Temsco
2:39:00 - 40:30 single engine blatt at 72 db
2:51:50 - 54:10 one helo 62 db
2:54:03 - 55:10 return behind
3:06:00 - 08:40 2 helos 63 db
3:07:40 - 09:25 1 helo 58 db
3:09:40 - 13:45 1 at 66 db, 1 at 64 db, 1 at 64 db, 2 at 63 db
3:15:50 - 18:25 1 helo at 63 db
3:18:30 - 20:20 return behind
3:20:30 - 21:40 return single engine
3:22:10 - 25:30 return behind
3:36:30 - --- 1 at 63 db, 1 at 64 db, 1 at 63 db
3:37:30 - 39:40 1 at 64 db overpowered end of above line
3:44:20 - 47:25 1 at 62 db and 1 at 63 db
3:47:55 - 50:07 1 returned at 60 db
3:50:07 - 3:53:07 3 returned 2 at 64 db, 1 too close at 67 db
4:01:12 - 03:30 returned behind
4:03:40 - 4:05:58 2 returned at 65 db
4:04:20 - ? (above too loud for end) 1 64 db going out...cross over!
4:15:50 - 18:16 1 at 62 db and 1 at 63 db

2002 178 in 9 hours; 98 in 4 hours under certain circumstances

Rory Darling
Resident
6732 Gray Street
907-463-4861

Comments: Noise is still a problem for residents. It has not diminished; the residents are consistently ignored. This is wrong. The helicopter industry, especially ERA helicopters, should have to conform to residential rules; not the other way around.

Solution: Move the heliports to Dupont per Baker Study. Decibel tax until then.

Doug Mertz

11380 N. Douglas
Highway Juneau

907-586-4004

akmertz@ak.net

Comments: Aircraft noise is the single most divisive issue in Juneau—and it is growing **worse**, despite some efforts at control. We moved away from Douglas, to North Douglas, because of the noise, and are concerned that now there will be a helicopter shift to North Douglas or to the airport—both of which would affect us. The only long-term help is by reducing the total number of flights from the current number, and limiting flight paths to minimum-impact areas.

Jan Moyer

6732 Gray Street
Juneau, AK 99801

907-463-4861

Comments: The helicopter noise problem has been going on for too long with no resolution in sight. I have attended many of these forums in the past but absolutely nothing has changed except the number of flights have increased and the noise has increased. This is very frustrating. It is obvious that the opinions of the locals does not count.

PLEASE do something to reduce the helicopter noise in Gastineau Channel. Moving ERA Helicopters to another site would be great.

John A. Sandor

3311 Foster Avenue

(907) 586-2497

jsandor@ak.net

Comments: Charter flightseeing is an ideal activity for the Juneau-Douglas Borough which has many beautiful and extraordinary features that are not easily accessible by ordinary means of transportation.

The charter flightseeing industry in Juneau has provided both residents and visitors with the opportunity to experience the thrill of seeing many features that they would not otherwise be able to see.

The industry has also been sensitive to limiting aircraft noise and have given a high priority to public safety.

John Sandor

Margo Waring

Self

11380 N. Douglas
Highway Juneau 99801

907-586-3155

Comments: Helicopter noise was so bad over our house in Douglas that we moved to North Douglas—beyond Bayview. Now I hear people saying the helicopters should be moved to the airport. Don't let that happen! Where could we move to next?

A way needs to be found to keep helicopters away from residential areas.

4.0 Comments

Recorded and transcribed by Angela Hull

- 1. Roy Darling**
North Douglas
Resident

I first got involved with the flightseeing issue in 1995 testifying as a concerned and affected resident. My general position on helicopter flightseeing is that I think that it's wrong that the industry has grown to the point where it infringes on the residential peace and quiet, I guess, and I think that it's long time – past time when actions were taken to mitigate the effects or eliminate the effects. I don't think that it's fair that they're there. I don't see that any of the past efforts have even taken our position seriously. I would be happy if the operators and the city would just acknowledge there's a problem. Once the problem gets acknowledged, I think it can be solved by implementing the Baker study by moving the helicopter operations outside of Gastineau Channel. Thank you.
- 2. Charlie Ross**

Yeah, my name is Charlie Ross, phone number for me is 321-1902. This is a short notice for me, but I just wanted to voice a couple of concerns. We have a cabin directly opposite Sheep Creek that would be impacted greatly by location of a heliport in – at the Dupont site, and we live there presently three to four months of the year, but we plan to live there up to eight months of the year. Concerns are the obvious noise considerations and secondly is just where is Juneau going in regards to tourist numbers and overall impacts. And also somehow to be making the process more public as I just received notice of this two days ago. But thank you very much for being here.
- 3. Gayle Trivette**
7870 Glacier
Highway

My name is Gayle Trivette. I live at 7870 Glacier Highway, which is pretty much across from Temsco Helicopter's helipad, and our home pre-dates their building. I've lived in Juneau for 31 years and have also worked in the helicopter industry so I'm sympathetic to their positions, but it's been – the noise has been so bad that our – that we really considered going away in the summer, and our neighbor down the street who used to make a lot of use of the phone call hotline has moved. We don't call it because it feels like an operation in futility and I would love to see the heliports – satellite heliports, but I don't feel very hopeful that will happen. Thank you for putting on this forum.
- 4. Sam Trivette**
7870 Glacier
Highway

My name is Sam Trivette. I live at 7870 Glacier Highway. We bought our lot in 1979. We did preparation work on the lot in 1980 and 81. Our house was built and we moved into it in 1982, and guess what – it's before – there was a heliport, and we wanted a nice southern exposure and we've never minded jets.

We actually had a condo over close to the airport, so jet noise has never been an issue, but I've watched a couple Viet Nam movies with my kids and it – all summer long it's like Viet Nam, 'cause the helicopters come in swarms and they – they're there for four, five, six minutes at a time, let their engines run while they're on the ground so the noise continues and then they take off again and it's like, you know, Viet Nam again. And you can't even talk to your neighbors four feet away because the noise level is so high, and that gets to be rather bothersome and when it starts in May and doesn't end until September we pray for cloudy days when helicopters can't fly. And if anyone wants to come out and check the decibel level, it's noisier than my chainsaw most of the time.

And so we would love to see – this has been an issue for years. We haven't said much recently because we thought no one was going to do anything, but it remains a huge issue and matter of fact, I suspect that if we can't get something changed then down the line we'll probably go find housing elsewhere because it ruins your outdoor time and I do spend a lot of time – my wife and I both, walking, hiking, and it'd be nice to have it away from all of the outdoor activities, but at least if you're out hiking you're going to be there for a period of time then gone, but when you live in that house, and spend a lot of time out of doors then you can't get away from it except to leave your house, and I don't feel like I should be required to leave my house in order to get some peace and quiet, for five or six months out of the summer.

And I don't – I'm not saying we should stop helicopters, I just think we ought to find other places for them to leave from and require that they not disturb neighborhoods like they have been for years. And it's gotten somewhat better in the sense that they don't fly directly over our houses quite as often as they used to, but they still fly close enough that you can't hear yourself talk to somebody five feet away most of the time and that's just too much. Thank you.

**5. Susan
Schrader**
10780
Mendenhall
Loop Road

My name is Susan Schrader, S-c-h-r-a-d-e-r, and I live at 10780 Mendenhall Loop Road, that's Back Loop, and I've lived there for 15 years. My house is directly under the flight path for returning helicopters from the glaciers, and the problem of helicopter noise has been an issue for my family ever since about eight years ago. Prior to that, there were helicopters, but the numbers were tolerable, and for a few of those early years there were no cruise ships in town on Saturdays, so we had one day of the weekend where we had peace and quiet.

I was a participant in the City and Borough's effort to do a negotiated discussion several years ago that ended, unfortunately in failure, so I am aware of the different viewpoints on this issue,

and I still maintain personally that by limiting flightseeing to either Saturday or Sunday would give the residents at least one day on a weekend of peace, that's assuming that helicopters could fly Monday through Friday, and also limiting the hours to

8 a.m. to 6 p.m. would give us peace in the evenings when we get home from work. Right now there are helicopters that are flying over my house up until 8 or 9 o'clock at night from April through September, seven days a week.

The other impact, major impact, to me personally is helicopter noise on nearly all of the recreational trails throughout the borough that I go to try and escape the noise at home. In particular the John Muir Trail, the Windfall Lake Trail, the Windfall Lake Cabin, and the John Muir Cabin, the West Glacier Trail, anyplace around Mendenhall Lake. I have had tourists walking the West Glacier Trail in the summer stop me and complain to me about the helicopter noise.

The idea of heliports particularly the one at Montana Creek, because that is close to my house, is in my view not a good idea, and I believe that if there is progress on the city's part to pursue a heliport in Montana Creek or in Thane, once again, many, many residents will become reactivated on this issue.

I think the lack of calls to the hotline, letters to the editor, and otherwise kind of complaints from the citizenry over the last couple years is open to interpretation. I would suggest that it's not so much that we're okay now with the helicopter noise, but that we are exhausted by participating in many public forums on the issues over the years and finding that very little has happened to address the problem. I used to call the hotline, kind of why waste my time, nothing ever happens. And I hope these comments are constructive and that the city and the agencies can get their acts together and actually deal with this problem. I think specifically the city should exert whatever legal means they have of providing us one quiet day a weekend and limiting – very reasonable limitations on the hours of operation the other six days. Thanks.

6. Larry Depute

My name is Larry Depute, D-e-p-u-t-e. I'm a 28-year resident of Juneau. I'm a pilot and an airplane mechanic, and I own two airplanes, and I live about a half mile up river from the airport. I selected this location to build my house because of its proximity to the airport and because I enjoy aviation.

In the last number of years, however, it has become quite a bit less enjoyable due to the increased helicopter traffic and – that goes by my house, both in departure and returning to the airport. I have been on flightseeing tours and have enjoyed it. I have no special dislike of helicopters other than the consistent and extremely annoying noise

that has permeated my life in the summertime and made it quite a bit less enjoyable. As a resident of Juneau, a long-time resident, I feel that we shouldn't be subjected to this type of noise abuse.

These – I've been to many of these discussions and it's the same thing over and over again. They've talked of moving it, but nobody else is interested in having the – a heliport near them and be subjected to the same noise. I've been accused of being a whiner because we don't like the noise, and it's been suggested that I leave Juneau to somewhere else where it's a little quieter. I don't find this a good option. My suggestion is that the heliports be made available at a reasonable cost to the helicopter tour companies in the Montana Creek area where they'd have easier access to the flight touring. End of comment.

7. Dean Williams
1401 Martin
Road

My name is Dean Williams, and I live 1401 Martin Road here in Juneau, downtown Juneau, right up close to the cemetery, and I've been here for 88 years. I don't think anybody in the room is quite like that. Anyway, I've been in the airline industry in one way or another for a long time, probably about 35 years now. I started with Pan American World Airways when they used to come in; they were the big carrier that built the runway out here in Juneau, and they were a wonderful outfit to work for. When they finally pulled out after I'd been with them for 20 years, they gave me the option of either moving to New York, Los Angeles, or staying up here and taking my severance pay, and I elected to take the severance pay. I think it was about \$5,000 which wasn't too bad those days. And that was back in the 60s.

It wasn't long, I was only about a week out of work, and I got a call from Cordova Airlines, Mudhole Smith, who was the owner of Cordova, and he wanted me to be the manager here in Juneau so I accepted that, said I'd give it a try, and that was an interesting deal. I was with them for about two years and then Alaska Airlines was going to take them over and I knew I wouldn't have any seniority, so I went to work for Pacific Northern Airlines for about a month and then they became Western and that was an interesting deal; but they were talking about moving out, too, which they eventually did. I was with them a couple of years.

And then I figured out airlines were disappearing from underneath me, so I decided that I'd get into my own airline business, so along with one of the pilots with Alaska Coastal Airlines, which operated from downtown Juneau here, they were going to be taken in by Alaska Airlines, which happened, so I decided to – the two of us decided to start Southeast Skyrise, which is now Wings of Alaska, and it was an interesting experience. I had ten years of that before I finally retired.

I started the flightseeing up over the Juneau Ice Field. I'd lived up there one summer with the Icefield group, so I knew quite a bit about it, and I knew that the people would love it. Marketing was something that I always enjoyed doing, so I got into the marketing for my airline, and, as a result, I could line up a lot of business. I used to go down to Vancouver, British Columbia, and get aboard one of the big ships, take my movie projector and my slide projector and put on a show coming up the inside passage. By the time we got to Juneau, the first time I did this was on the big ship Arcadia, we ended up with 230 flightseeing passengers. Not bad.

We were flying the Grumman Goose, we were flying the Beavers, and the Cessna 206, and we had our hands full because while we were flying all those people up over the Icefield we had to still keep up with our commitments with the villages, Angoon, Tenakee, and places like that. So it was kind of interesting. I knew that at times we'd get a little jammed up and we wouldn't be able to leave right away when we got the people off the cruise ship, so I put on a little bit of a show for them and talked to them and kept them happy, and pilots used to come up and say, "Dean, talk a little bit longer, we're not quite ready yet." That was fun. I enjoyed that part. It was very successful. Really, that was our money maker, the summer business. The wintertime you're doing a lot better if you can just drink coffee, some days especially.

When it comes to the flightseeing that's going on for the past few years here, I've noticed a huge improvement with the helicopters coming over the city here. Now, there's days when you look up and all you can do is barely make out the helicopters, so they're doing their thing, they're doing it right. It's wonderful. And I don't know about some of the outlying areas, some of the people may experience it a little different, but I think it's been great. I know quite a bit about noise because with Alaska Airlines when they started coming down Gastineau Channel here they would be flying the 737-300s or 200s, and it would be pretty noisy. They'd take off like the midnight special, when it took off about one o'clock, one in the morning, come over if you're trying to sleep, that would kind of interrupt you, and they'd start again about six in the morning so your night's sleep got chopped up. So I got on the phone a few times and I got a hold of a chief pilot in Seattle and recommended they do everything they could possibly to eliminate that and he said, "well, fortunately, we're going to get rid of some of the older aircraft and we'll be using the 400s," and what an improvement that was when they started them, they climb right up, very steep, get out of here now, and I can sleep through the whole night and never even hear an airplane, so it's good. I'm all for it. I think it's wonderful that it's worked out that way. So that's about

the summary of what I been doing for all these years, but I'm still going strong. Okay. Thank you.

8. Bill Leighty
227 Gastineau
Avenue

I'm here to be sure that energy is thoroughly considered in all aspects of this. The energy by which the helicopters themselves operate. The energy required to move people around on the ground to get to where the helicopters might operate and of course the energy required to get people to Juneau via cruise ship or airline or ferry, in order for them to wish to procure flightseeing on the helicopters.

I suspect that fossil fuels will be less available, more expensive, less acceptable, perhaps even allocated for ration in a way that may moot the whole question because my back-of-the-envelope calculations, the cruise ships which bring people to Juneau probably now are using somewhere between 50 and 100 million gallons of fossil fuel per year to accomplish their mission, which includes visiting several communities along the way, but still that amount of fuel needs to be burned in order to get those ships and those helicopter flightseeing customers to Juneau.

In the future carbon-constrained world and the world of higher oil and fuel prices, that simply may not be acceptable, and so the clientele may be not available for the helicopters, but at this point in time in our planning, we should be mindful that every gallon of fossil fuel, whether it's helicopter fuel or cruise ship fuel or bus fuel to haul people around, when burned in our internal combustion engines, puts 20 pounds of carbon dioxide into earth's atmosphere, and, although I've been waving my arms around about this for years, decades, I think humanity is finally catching on that this is a very large problem, and so, in our deliberations on this particular topic, we should be mindful of the role of energy in all aspects of helicopter operations in Juneau and that we have no promising alternatives at this time. I think I've become something of an expert on hydrogen and remind us all that hydrogen is not a clean, abundant energy source because it's not a source at all, it's a fuel, a carrier, a storage medium but you have to make the hydrogen, and it's probably not going to be very useful for helicopter fuel because of its very low energy density by volume and the cost of storing it. Thank you.

9. Kevin Hood
5240 N.
Douglas
Highway #3

My name is Kevin Hood; I'm a resident of Juneau. I live on North Douglas Highway. Do I need to give my address? I live at 5240 N. Douglas Highway, #3, and I would just like to voice my concern that I think the impacts from helicopters are quite substantial regardless of the amount of complaints perhaps received or not received by the company. I think one of the greatest impacts that is, unfortunately, not documented so well is the loss of solitude in the back country. With helicopters flying up on a regular basis to the Herbert Glacier, the Mendenhall Glacier, and also up the Taku

Inlet, it is actually impossible really off the Juneau road system to get into the back country and have an experience where you will not hear helicopters.

You have to go across Stephens Passage or you have to get up towards Berners Bay, but of course they're trying to put a road in there and there's a mine so the activity is quite significant in that area already. Basically you have to cross Stephens Passage, Lynn Canal, or the Taku Inlet itself to get away from the helicopter noise.

For many people, we live in Alaska so we can get away from it all, and helicopters prevent us from doing so. I would encourage practices that would minimize the noise impacts and focus the helicopter routes. I would particularly like to see no further expansion of routes, but rather a greater consolidation to perhaps just up Mendenhall or just up Taku and perhaps to free up the Herbert Glacier so there's at least somewhere we can get away from it all. Nineteen thousand helicopter flights are authorized by the Forest Service for tourism a year, and that's not counting some of the non-tourist flights like to set up infrastructure and things to support their tourist industry there, and I think that's a genie that's let out of the bottle, and I think it's very unfortunate, and I think that's the Forest Service failing to basically take into account the social impacts of the helicopters, not to mention of course the direct impacts just on the quality of life of people living under the flight routes which obviously is substantial, and so yeah, I think that's about it.

10. Sean Strauss
P.O. Box 22451

My name is Sean Strauss, S-e-a-n S-t-r-a-u-s-s. My address is P.O. Box 22451, Juneau, 99802, and I am here to have the heliport at an alternative site, primarily it's to have it [at] an alternative site, and the reason why I say that is because it's very clear that nothing has been done but talk for years on this topic, and it's time for action, and I stress that, because I just heard somebody else tell me that, that people have been gathering and talking for years and Assembly members, or somebody has been passing the buck, and it's time for somebody to start taking some action, making decisions, and saying this is what's going to happen.

Second of all, I'm here to propose an alternative site to one of the two primary and official alternative sites. I strongly suggest a new site be built at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. Now there are a lot of reasons that work for that. First of all the path to there, to bring visitors, is already set up for tremendous visitor traffic. Second of all, there's plenty of room to build a heliport at one of the parking lots that's already there or to build a road a little bit past or even a long distance past the visitor center, towards the glacier, that would put it in a convenient place. It's easy to get there, and it's not like the glacier is going to be advancing any time

soon to threaten any site built out there. Third of all, having – if you build it on one of the parking lots that’s already there, you can just set aside an area for a large H and have helicopters take off from it tomorrow, and finally and most importantly, if it is built somewhere beyond the visitor center where we blaze a trail, build it, I don’t know – a quarter mile, half a mile beyond it, it would have very minimal impact in terms of takeoff and landing. Also if the flight plan is developed so that the helicopters go over the glacier, as opposed to going over Montana Creek, then the flight plan itself would have minimal impact. So the impact would be extraordinarily small. All of this is on top of the fact that nothing has been done for years but talk, and it’s time for action. I’m done.

Hi, this is Sean Strauss again. I’ve read in the Baker plan of 2001 that having a heliport at the glacier would adversely affect a new set of people; well I don’t believe that considered having a site that was beyond the visitor center itself, by blazing a trail out there and by having a flight plan that goes over the glacier itself. Currently what’s in the Baker plan, the reason primarily why it advised against and eventually dropped having that as a heliport alternate site was because it would affect people in the Montana Creek area. If you amend the flight plan so that they take off from beyond the visitor center and go over the glacier instead and return that way, the impact would be extraordinarily minimal. Now yes, we will need federal assistance in the form of some person or some people who work for the federal government to make sure that that happens, but let’s get them; let’s get their help. That’s what the federal government is for; it’s for the residents of the United States. The people right now that this land is most affecting by either its use or non-use are the residents of Juneau, so let’s get together and let’s push the federal government to say “yeah, let’s blaze a trail and let’s put it out there.” It’s – I mean, we’re – helicopters are going to adversely affect some people, somewhere, somehow. That’s irretrievable. I understand that. I don’t like that myself. I do support, I strongly support the helicopters because of their economic benefit but I also believe that the helicopters must make sure that they are working with the people that live in this town, because their helicopters do adversely affect the people and so they must actively work to make sure that minimal impact occurs on the residents, and this is one way of doing it. And if we do it this way, I’ll strongly support it because helicopters are a good idea and having minimal noise impact is a good idea, but if we can only have helicopters with a big noise impact, which is what we’re doing now, which is the result of no change in the last ten years, well that’s not useful, and it has to stop. There must be a change. I’m done.

- 11. Paula Terrell**
5025 Thane
Road
Thane
Neighborhood
Association
- Paula Terrell, 5025 Thane Road, and I'm providing these comments on behalf of Thane Neighborhood Association. Thane Neighborhood Association does not – our survey indicated that residents are very impacted by both helicopter and floatplane noise. We do not want to see it moved to another residential area, or to a residential area – take it from one and put it on the back of another. That's our major concern.
- 12. Paula Terrell**
Personal
Testimony
- This is Paula Terrell speaking. As an individual, I am hearing on the radio and in conversations with some of the operators that they believe there's no problem because the level of complaints has decreased, and they are talking about complaints normally made to the hotline. And I think if you asked people who were bothered, you'd find that most of us do not call the hotline because we've given up; nothing ever happens. So to say there's no problem and base that on the number of calls to the hotline is faulty reasoning or assumption.
- 13. Mala Reges**
- My name is Mala Reges, M-a-l-a R-e-g-e-s, and I guess my comments tonight are partly based on having read the handout tonight from the FHWA. I was a little taken aback by that. I was also a little taken aback by the presentation that was on KTOO this afternoon where people were basically saying we've got the TBMP, and nobody calls except for a few people, so we've got the problem well in hand, and I think it's important to know as one of the callers to that over the years that the comments that I've gotten and the way that I feel about it is that there hasn't been any significant response to solve the problem, so why keep calling. All you get is basically a pat on the head, thank you for calling, we'll try to do better in the future, and that's kind of basically where you leave it and so after a while you just stop calling because you know that there's not going to be any relief, and it's frustrating to have that held up as the be-all and end-all of what we can do about the problem since we're not going to respond to you and then because you stop calling, we're going to call ourselves a success. So it's a little difficult. But I think overall, one thing that's being missed is the fact that the problem, from my perspective, stems from the fact that we have an industrial activity in flightseeing that's being carried out in residential neighborhoods. Most communities have realized that industrial activity and residential activity need to be separated, and that's kind of where I think we need to go with flightseeing noise. I think that it's a good business for Juneau, but not within the residential neighborhoods. We need to look at the zoning powers that the CBJ has that the FAA has recognized that they have and zone flightseeing to an area where they can exist happily and where residences can, and the people who live in them, exist quietly.

14. Aaron Brakel

My name is Aaron Brakel. I grew up downtown in Juneau and have been significantly impacted by the expansion of tourism in Juneau and the helicopter noise has been a fairly consistent irritation, and at times worse than that. One thing I've been thinking about is we – how important solitude and silence is and being able to get out of town to quiet places, and one of the terrible tragedies to me of the helicopter flightseeing industry is the fact that the silence has been taken from the mountains and from the valleys. That's oppressive to me. That's just painful because those wonderful places that I grew up going, which have so much meaning to me in terms of getting away from the everyday and into the quieter places, they're just – you can be there and then whupwhupwhupwhupwhup [sic] here's the helicopters. So what I've been thinking about for a little while is, if there's a way to rest the ridges, to have some kind of a rotating schedule that might work for both the operators and you know people who are using the trails, going on the ridges and the valleys, you know like Sunday through Wednesday the helicopters fly on the north side of town and Wednesday through Saturday they're – they fly on the south side, and I know there's weather issues, visibility that, you know, could make some of that difficult, but for people to be able to have the option to go into those beloved places without that intrusion of our society which is so pervasive in so many different ways, in the form of helicopters and the noise particularly from helicopters because on so many of those places, you can really get away from the sounds of society and into the quietness. You can do that very, very, very quickly from the road system, you know, in the valleys, and if there's a way to recover – at this point it's not preserve, that has been lost during the good – for the valley bottoms and for the ridges hiking season the non-avalanche danger, the non-snow danger seasons, that would be really, really, really, really valuable to me and would cause me to have a better feeling about the flightseeing operations generally, and I'd feel like the industry would – I'd feel more like the industry is doing its part to allow other uses which are precluded – that's a use that's been precluded by the way the industry has shaped up. So, that's the main part of my comments. One – you know, something that I kind of think about in terms of making things work for everybody, you know, in a non-helicopter situation is the rotary that was built downtown near the library, how wonderfully successful that has been in the cruise ship buses, the passenger buses not having to go up South Franklin Street, you know, at low speed with lots of exhaust and then going slowly up those hills and across Fourth Street and down Main Street. Once that was – the rotary was built that has essentially gone, they just don't do that anymore, and it is really, really, really improved my outlook towards the industry

downtown because I'm not being choked, and that's something that I'd like to see something similar, you know, with an idea of resting the ridges.

The idea of resting the ridges would be a real improvement. One thing that I think money could be spent for is determining where those helicopter noise impacts take place. You know, I'm particularly thinking about the ridges and valleys right off of Egan Drive, you know, between the channel and the glacier, but to think about what type of flight lines could be taken that, you know, on a rotating basis wouldn't impact different areas and to recover a quiet experience, which is just, again, to me so important in – particularly in this day and age with society, the media society, the internet is just so pervasive, and that's just my experience of growing up in Juneau is the sound increase. The places that are impacted by noise has so changed dramatically, you know the waterways are now really, really affected near Juneau by the many – much – not just – not at all just the tourism industry, but many, many different small boats so you don't have on the waterways those silent places, and if you can recover them for the valleys and ridges, boy that would be to the good. Thank you.

5.0 E-mailed Comments

Patricia J. O'Brien

PO Box 32618
Juneau, Alaska 99803

to
Steve Zaske

Dear Mr. Zaske,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the federal funding designated solely for heliports or heliport roads. These comments are as a 65 year old citizen of Juneau living just off the Montana Creek road for 27 years and in the Mendenhall Glacier area for 35 years. This is home.

Tourism Escalation. As I watched the growth of tourism, initially I was highly supportive. Tourism boosts the local economy without destroying the environment as do some other industries. I also enjoy that others have the opportunity to appreciate this land and wildlife as I do. However recent visitors, including relatives, have been stunned at the mobs of people and competing activities for their dollars. It is not what one expects, when visiting Alaska. Growth has been too fast and too single minded on large tour ships. The people who live here, the land, and the ecosystem are stressed and even harmed. It is past time to limit the growth, both in terms of who to attract and what kinds of and number of activities that may be undertaken.

Degraded environmental quality. Helicopters and their associated noise have earned the worst reputation, along with unscrupulous wildlife viewing charters that endanger wildlife and the cruise ship industry, itself. I have attended previous meetings

on helicopters and understand that helicopter owners have taken steps to decrease the noise level by taking more circuitous routes to avoid densely populated neighborhoods as they head toward the glacier. It is slightly better, depending on where you are. I take daily walks. When I walk the trail by Mendenhall River during the summer, I hear the waves of seven helicopters heading to the glacier and I hear them when I walk in the glacier area. I am concerned not just for Juneau citizens and the degradation of our quality of life, but also for the wildlife, and even for the tourists at the campground or the Mendenhall Visitor's Center who can't afford a helicopter trip. Many of us long to silence the whirring roar, so that we may again hear the calls of the thrush and the rustlings of a squirrel.

No additional helicopters should be permitted to fly to the glaciers—a reduction would be better (a comment I hope you will share with the Forest Service). And most of all, they should not be allowed to depart from sites near Montana Creek Road. I have no confidence that such a shifting of helicopter noise from one neighborhood to another will result in any reduction of helicopter use from existing heliports. The politics of Juneau and the lust for tourist dollars would keep the other heliports active—we would eventually have even more helicopter traffic.

Young's comments. A neighbor friend, Shane Young, copied me on the comments he sent you last evening. I support everything that he related and will not repeat his points, except to summarize them here:

- 1) **Loss of environmental and recreational area.** A heliport on Montana Cr. Road will destroy an environmental treasure and popular recreational area and than many enjoy.
- 2) **Noise.** The noise problem would only be transferred from one residential area to another, not eliminated. The study recommending the Montana Creek area predates re-zoning for additional housing and an enormous housing growth in the area, with more planned.
- 3) **Traffic.** Montana Creek Road is inadequate for additional tourist bus traffic considering all the other tourism related traffic and increased traffic from new and planned housing.
- 4) **Taxpayer gift to private industry.** This heliport would be an enormous gift to the Juneau helicopter flight seeing industry. Taxpayer's money should not be used as a gift to private enterprise.

Recommendation: The FHWA should contact Alaska's congressional delegation to share the comments of Juneau citizens.

Further, based on information given at the Charter Flightseeing Open House, I understand that funds are insufficient to do an environmental impact study and build an adequate heliport and supporting road improvements for additional traffic. That information should be relayed as well. The funds should not be used or our congressional delegation should re-designate the monies to a project that will benefit all citizens of Juneau.

Again thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Patricia J. O'Brien

Val & Bob Horner

[\[mailto:sealad@bearsrun.com\]](mailto:sealad@bearsrun.com)

Sent: Wednesday,
April 26, 2006
10:54 AM

to
Steve Zaske

My husband Bob and I live in the greater Montana Creek Road neighborhood. We operate a seasonal bed and breakfast from our home, so I can appreciate Juneau's interest in tourism. However, we do not support the building of the heliport up the Montana Creek Road area.

I have read the CBJ research report and find that the research is thin at best. It fails to completely address the noise pollution, and other issues, that would occur. The meters reading the noise level measured CURRENT levels where the helicopters are higher above the residential areas than would occur with a local heliport. The current access from the airport area is appropriate. It is a site already designed for air traffic. In addition, there will be "people" pollution at the proposed heliport site. The proposed area does not have public facilities to support the proposed level of public access.

Second, the DOT contribution to the road is a drop in the bucket for the cost needed to create a road to the proposed site. The currently dirt road is narrow and prone to high flooding. Expansion of the road to a level to accommodate the high volume of large buses is an expense the city cannot afford—of course that is not your problem. My point is that the DOT and CBJ money should be used for a better purpose than putting in a road and heliport that is not wanted in the neighborhood, and is more than the CBJ budget can support. Most of these type of excursions are sold aboard the tour ships and are exempt from sales tax, therefore, the funds will come from the property taxes paid by the residents of the neighborhood not by those using the facilities. Again, that is more a local concern than anything in DOT power, but it does explain another reason why the residents are so opposed to the heliport.

Third, this neighborhood is a growing area for family residences. This means an ever increasing number of children, pets, joggers, and pedestrians along the roadway. The city bus stop is very near the intersection of Mendenhall Loop and Montana Creek, and every time I drive by it there are people waiting for the city bus.

These people walk along this roadway from their area homes. I have witnessed tour buses, like the ones that will access the heliport, driving at speeds above the speed limit. True, they shouldn't be, but it isn't a perfect world and the drivers do not obey the limits. They are more concerned about dropping their cargo in time to pick up another group—the more trips the more money made. The current level of bus traffic to the west Glacier area causes enough risk, increasing the volume three and four fold to provide access to the heliport increases the safety risks.

Lastly, the proposed area is heavily populated by brown bears. This is going to add to the bear problems Juneau already struggles with.

Obviously CBJ is more concerned about revenues from the tourist trade than they are about what is best and safest for the community. Please do not agree to the CBJ plans to build the road and heliport in the Montana Creek area. It is not supported by the neighborhood, and in fact is only supported by those in the community who wish the heliport was not in their neighborhood. It is simply moving the problem from one area to another.

Thanks for listening...

Val Horner
4999 Steelhead Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Marge Hermans

9630 Moraine Way
Juneau, AK 99801
mhermans@acsalaska.net

Sent: Wednesday,
April 26, 2006 11:15
PM

to
Steve Zaske

Dear Mr. Zaske:

Please accept this letter as our strong opposition to the idea of building a heliport anywhere in the Montana Creek area. This poorly thought out suggestion would not solve the problem of helicopter noise in Juneau; it would simply increase the problem.

A heliport would be inappropriate in our highly residential and outdoor recreational area. Besides excessive noise (which has not been adequately documented in the study done to date) it would threaten increased traffic on a two-lane neighborhood road, the possibility of fuel spills, and safety hazards as helicopters made frequent takeoffs and landings away from the managed air space of the airport.

The problems of excessive noise from large numbers of commercial tourism helicopters has not been solved in Juneau, but moving the problem to Montana Creek neighborhood area will not solve it.

If the only use for the federal money on hand is to build heliports or access roads to them, we suggest it be returned to the federal government. It would be better used for other purposes, and Juneau would be better served by finding other solutions to this problem.

Sincerely,

Thomas Osborn & Marjorie Hermans

Nick Jans

to
Steve Zaske

Dear Mr. Zaske,

As a 6-year resident and homeowner of the upper Mendenhall Valley (in fact, the last house on the west side of the lake before the glacier) I am strongly opposed to the notion of moving a problem – helicopter noise– to solve it. I have spoken with many of my neighbors on this issue and we stand 100 percent AGAINST the building of a heliport at the headwaters of Montana Creek– or, for that matter, to the end of Thane Road. Such a “solution” ignores logistical and environmental issues that would be obvious to anyone who knows Montana Creek Road and the surrounding area. The real problem is addressing the incessant noise pollution that helicopters impose on the entire Juneau environment, including remote hiking trails. This industry employs relatively few locals (most employees are from Outside) and provides minimal benefit to Juneau’s economy while significantly impacting all of us. As it is, we at the end of Mendenhall Valley are bathed in helicopter racket for half the year– and a significant number of these flights violate the established minimums, as local conditions and the desire for profit dictate. Helicopters have in fact used the adjacent gravel pit this past spring for days at a time as a base for slingload operations– apparently without any permits at all. In “normal” periods of operation, noise, especially during certain weather and atmospheric conditions, is enough to thoroughly pollute and disrupt an otherwise peaceful environment. Simply put, we in the upper Mendenhall Valley are vehemently opposed to any plan to dump more of the very significant burden already placed on us by this invasive cash cow/amusement park ride for Outsiders on us specifically, or on anyone else in the greater Juneau area. Noise abatement for all of us is an issue whose time is at hand– and one that could be greatly ameliorated by somewhat longer flights to unpopulated areas. Likewise, a phasing in of available, quieter machines should begin at once, with the goal of replacing all tour helicopters with modern, quieter machines in 15 years. The burden for any added expense should be placed squarely on the shoulders of those who profit from this endeavor.

Sincerely, Nick Jans

**Michelle and Mark
Kaelke**

9723 Trappers Lane
Juneau, AK 99801

michelle@flyfishsoutheast.com

789-5550

to
Steve Zaske

Mr. Zaske,

We strongly object to the FHWA's money being used to study a heliport in the Montana Creek Valley. This area continues to grow into a larger residential area with about 400 current homes and 200 more housing units recently approved. If a heliport is built, it will only move the noise problem from one neighborhood to another. Helicopter traffic should be controlled by the air traffic controller of the Juneau airport. For safety factors, we do not welcome a remote heliport site.

The Montana Creek road is already a heavily used road for both residential, commercial recreation and industrial use. Additional traffic that a heliport would bring is not welcomed. We also do not welcome large fueling tankers on the road. The potential of a fuel spill into this high valued fishing stream is not a risk worth taking.

The Baker study's results indicating Montana Creek is a potential heliport site is very misguided. The test flights did not reflect what noise an actual heliport would generate. It was also conducted on sunny high ceiling days, thus the greater noise generated on low cloud days, was not demonstrated. We hope you will not base any decisions on this study.

Montana Creek area is a community recreational area utilized by fisherman, hikers, bikers, gardeners and others enjoying a local treasure so close to our community. It is also a high valued habitat for brown and black bears and other wildlife species. A heliport would ultimately ruin human enjoyment of this valley and ward off wildlife living around this creek.

Please do not spend any of the Federal Highway money on a heliport idea.

Thank you,

Michelle and Mark Kaelke

Shane Young, P.E.

to
Steve Zaske

Dear Steve,

As a 28 year resident of Montana Creek Road, I am highly opposed to any plan to build a heliport in the Montana Creek Road area for the following reasons:

LOSS OF RECREATION AREA: First and foremost I am against the development and destruction of the old growth forest in this region. This is a unique area that is currently used for recreation by many Juneau residents and visitors. This area is truly one of a kind and only minutes away for nearby residents. A heliport would surely mean clear cutting a large space and causing potential damage to the Montana Creek Watershed. The introduction of a heliport and all related activities would put this area off limits to

myself and many others I know who seek out places of solitude and natural surroundings for recreational activities.

HELICOPTER NOISE: Second, I am opposed to the noise that will be associated with helicopter flights. I realize that many residents of Juneau are demanding a solution to the noise that they currently experience. I don't believe, however, that a solution exists in transferring the problem from one residential area to another. All three potential sites that were identified in the Baker Study are located in the Montana Creek valley in relative close proximity to the rifle range. Gun fire from the rifle range is clearly audible along the entire length of Montana Creek Road. Regardless of the findings of this study, logic dictates that the helicopter noise will also be clearly audible, and more continuously persistent than the current gunfire from the rifle and shotgun ranges to the residents of Montana Creek Road. Another item mentioned in recent studies is that the new proposed heliport sites are off the beaten path, and away from large areas of human activity. This is actually not the case. Currently there are seven housing subdivisions located immediately off of Montana Creek Road. They include Moraine Way, Trappers Lane, Montana Creek Estates Phases one through four, and Brigadoon Estates. Montana Creek Estates Phase Five was recently approved for a high density planned unit development which will add more than 100 additional households, all serviced exclusively via Montana Creek Road. Glacier Lands, located at the current gravel pit, recently obtained approval for D-5 zoning. A condominium development is currently planned at that site for construction beginning this summer. And this is only the beginning. CBJ has shown much interest in using the Montana Creek Road area for future residential expansion due to the buildability of the land in conjunction with close proximity to the CBJ sewer system. Again, it makes absolutely no sense to transfer the noise issue from one residential area to another. This is not a solution to any problem, only a transfer of the problem from one residential neighborhood to another.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION: While Montana Creek Road is scheduled to undergo upgrades in the way of resurfacing and the addition of a bike path, it will remain a small two lane road. In summer months, traffic on the road currently consists of an increasing number of residents in competition with tour busses from Alaska Travel Adventures and Auke Te Shaw (Goldbelt Inc.) river rafting operations, a bicycle tour company and all subsequent bicyclists, in addition to all traffic headed to and from the Mendenhall Campground. The addition of flight seeing tour busses would add a considerable amount of traffic to a road that is currently overstressed in the summertime. As a local Civil Engineer and registered traffic engineer, I know of no traffic study

that has been conducted on this road in recent years to validate the new high density housing approach that the CBJ targeted this area for. I have also learned in recent years that the CBJ rarely conducts or requires traffic studies with respect to decisions that affect future residential development for roads like Montana Creek Rd. The point being that future additional tour busses would be in conflict with a residential traffic situation that will surely go unchecked considering the current rate of CBJ approved development on Montana Creek Road and their lack of proper traffic and road planning. Residents of Montana Cr. Road were assured by CBJ in 1997 that zoning on Montana Cr. Road would stay at D-1. The addition of a bike path was recently offered as a token, by CBJ by way of the State of Alaska (who plans to transfer ownership to CBJ soon), as an excuse to allow higher density housing to property developers. It was not a solution to long term traffic congestion that is sure to worsen in the coming years.

TAX PAYER GIFT TO PRIVATE INDUSTRY: A new heliport in the Montana Creek Road area would be the equivalent to an enormous long term financial gift to a limited few privately owned flight seeing companies, the benefits of which would be mostly enjoyed by a limited few owners. The compounded cumulative value of this gift would be very substantial to the helicopter operators in the long term. There are many other local flight seeing companies and scores of other private businesses who will never receive a multi-million dollar gift from the tax payers. I certainly don't want my tax dollars being used as a gift to fund the activities of a private industry by destroying an area that I use and enjoy.

The installation of a heliport in the Montana Creek Road area would surely decrease the quality of life that my family, myself, and many of my neighbors and fellow residents currently enjoy. I urge you to do whatever is in your power to see that this federal money is used for something other than this project.

Sincerely,

Shane Young, P.E.

Mary F Willson

<mailto:mwillson@gci.net>

Sent: Friday, April 28,
2006 9:55 PM

Dear Mr. Zaske:

A heliport in the Montana Creek area of Juneau is a terrible idea. It brings a bad noise problem to an increasingly densely inhabited area and increases traffic on an already-busy street. Previous studies (i.e., the Baker study) did not account for days of low ceilings when the 'copters come right over the tops of houses, shaking the dishes in the cupboards and making it impossible to listen to the radio or talk on the phone, nor did it account for multiple 'copters/day. These tourist flights are not international or interstate, but purely local, and should not be regulated by the

FAA. But for safety's sake, all flights should be controlled by the airport—this local heliport would have no control tower, and no readily available emergency services. A bad idea altogether!

Thank you for your attention.

6.0 Mailed Comments

TO: Steven D. Zaske
FHWA

FR: Chip Thoma
Box 21884, Juneau AK 99802

RE: Helicopter Flightseeing in Alaska

DATE: 4-19-06

Thank you for conducting the open house here last night on the impacts of helicopter flightseeing. Speaking as a downtown Juneau resident, this has been a decades-old controversy that could be virtually mitigated by one company re-locating to the Juneau airport, and having new flight-paths away from residential areas.

Importantly, alternative helicopter sites will just impact other local areas with noise and large buses, while re-location of all helicopters to the airport is an appropriate response to the major complaints of noise and overflight routes. I do not support alternative heliports as a solution to flightseeing noise problems.

As background, the explosive growth of cruiseships and flightseeing in SE Alaska brought two significant problems to residents: pollution and noise. In recent years, the cruise lines have spent approximately \$2 million per ship to eliminate their sewage discharges, and these ships are no longer major polluters of the rich, marine waters of the Inside Passage of Alaska. (This was a very positive outcome after numerous complaints of residents over un-treated discharges of black & grey water by these 25-30 vessels).

The helicopter firms that work closely with the cruise lines have also addressed many noise complaints of past years by tighter grouping, altitude and route changes. However, one firm's physical location and flight routes remain as the principle source of flightseeing noise complaints in Juneau.

ERA Helicopters' terminal is located at 5 mile North Douglas Highway, now surrounded by residential areas. Their primary summer flight route for flightseeing is south down Gastineau Channel, over Egan Highway, downtown Juneau, Douglas Highway and Thane.

These are areas that cumulatively contain about 12,000 local residents, and another 8,000 average daily cruiseship passengers. (One could easily view this fly route as visual advertising, as do the fixed-wing flightseeing planes that use the cruiseship harbor). After flying over Juneau, Douglas and Thane, the ERA flights then turn east into the Juneau Ice Field, where they present no further noise conflicts with residents.

As the majority of Juneau noise complaints emanate from ERA's summer flightseeing routes over these population areas, there must be relief. The other helicopter companies are located at the Juneau airport, and those flight routes access the Ice Field quickly after

takeoff. ERA does not do so, instead flying over the highways and population areas, seemingly as part of the flightseeing tours.

Neither I nor any other Juneau resident would have any complaints with flightseeing helicopters if they were quiet. They could run 100 flights a day under those circumstances, but that is not the case. They are loud, and on both clear and cloudy days, incessant. It is time to correct the ERA noise problem by re-locating their summer operation.

ERA Helicopters should be in new facilities adjacent to the Juneau airport, as are the other flightseeing companies. New ERA flight paths directly to the Ice Field would eliminate the overflight of so many Juneau residents. ERA's summer camps and operations on the Ice Field would not have to change; only the access routes to initiate and exit the tours.

The monetary value of ERA's North Douglas property is extremely high as a residential area, worth many millions, and is certainly enough to finance re-location to the airport. When ERA first established on North Douglas, there were few adjacent residents, and very few flights prior to tourism. But time and one million cruiseship passengers each year have changed those numbers dramatically.

Regarding safety, I am confident that an ERA relocation to the airport will not increase safety concerns, but rather decrease them by assigning new, adjacent Ice Field routes that avoid Juneau population areas and Gastineau Channel airspace now shared with other fixed-wing traffic.

I urge the FHWA to dedicate whatever funds and influence you have in this matter to assist ERA Helicopters to re-locate to the Juneau Airport. ERA can then establish new flight routes with the Forest Service to avoid population impact areas, as the other helicopter flightseeing companies have done.

The FHA can have a positive impact to help solve the noise problems from summer flightseeing in Juneau. Please assign your best personnel and efforts to bring this to a successful conclusion. Thank you.



Chip Thoma
Box 21884
Juneau, AK 99802
907-586-2117 (h)
chipt@alaska.net

7.0 Attendee List

Name	Organization (if applicable)	Mailing Address (including zip code)	Phone Number E-mail Address
Joe Mehrkens	Environmental Economics Alaska	2992 Linda Ave. Juneau, AK 99801	907-789-3323 jrmehrkens@yahoo.com
Sukey P. Firman		9084 Winnis Drive Juneau, AK 99801	907-523-0827 tuaperra@alaska.com
*Tim Strand		9084 Winnis Dr. Juneau	
Dale Lewis		4278 Brothers Ave. Juneau	907-523-6932
*Paula Terrel	Thane Neighborhood Association	5025 Thane Road	907-586-3451 pterrel@gci.net
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*Bill Leighty		Box 20993 Juneau, AK 99802	907-586-1426
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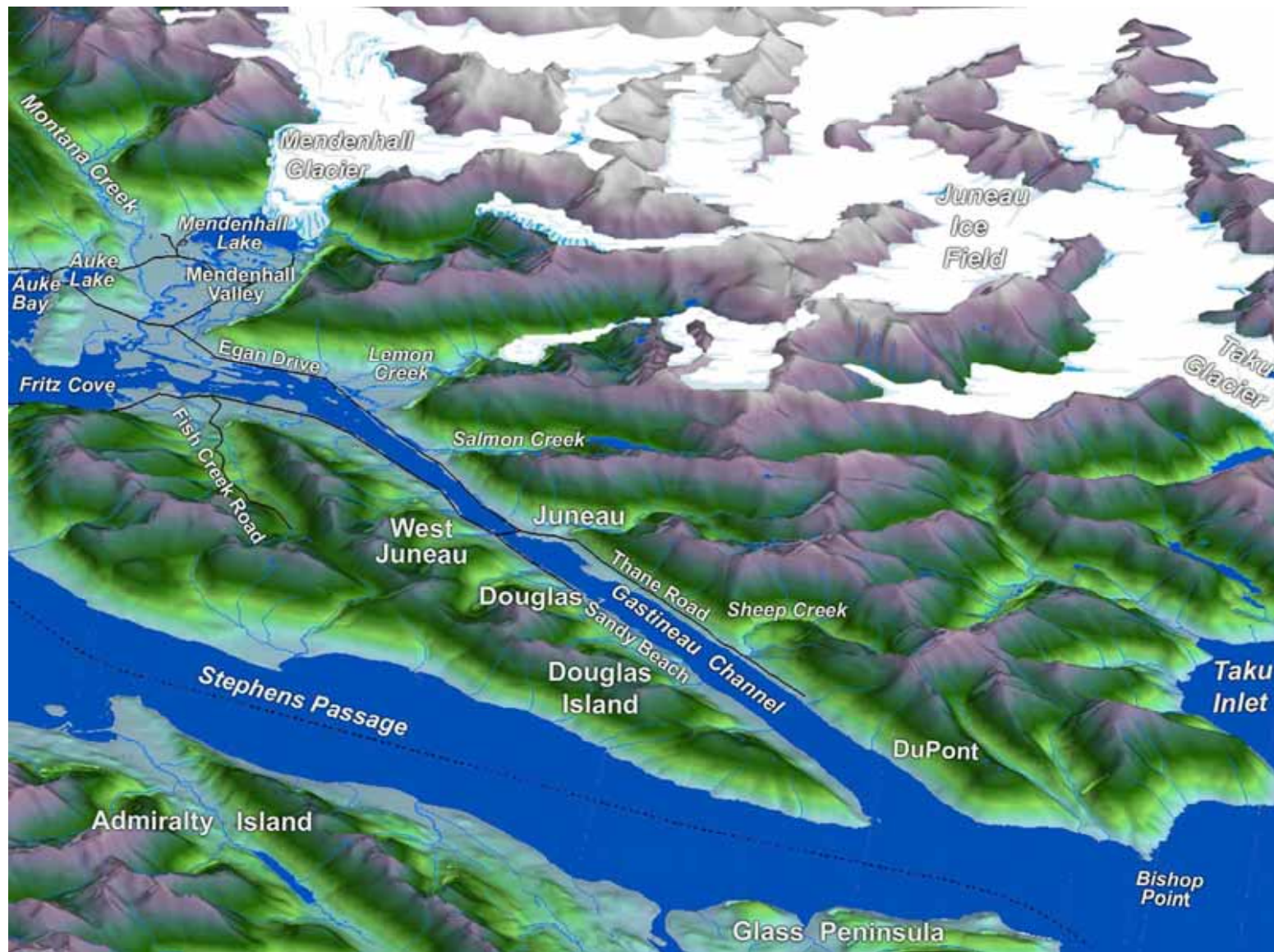


Figure 2-1
Juneau Map

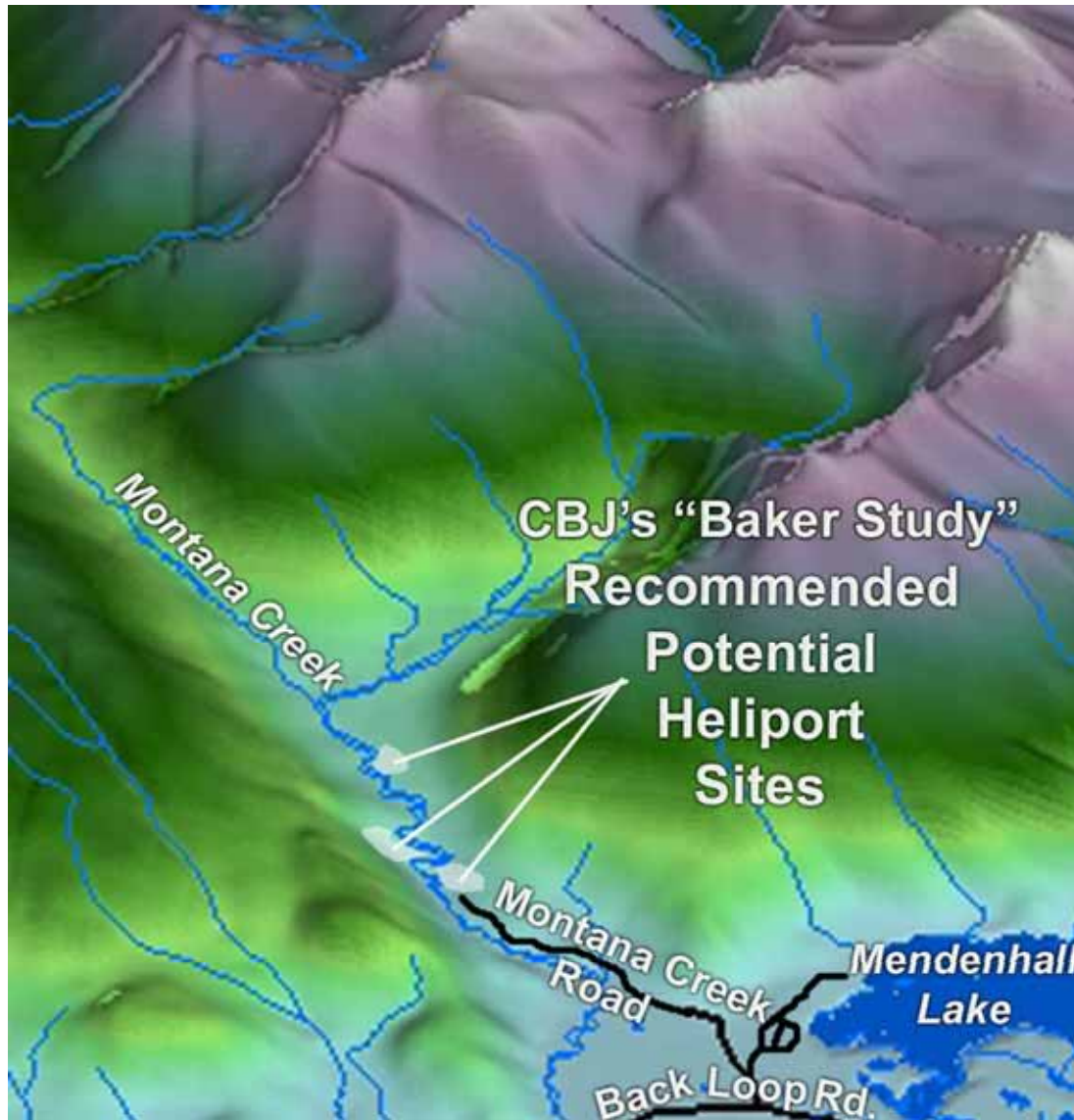


Figure 2-2
Potential Montana Creek Heliport Site

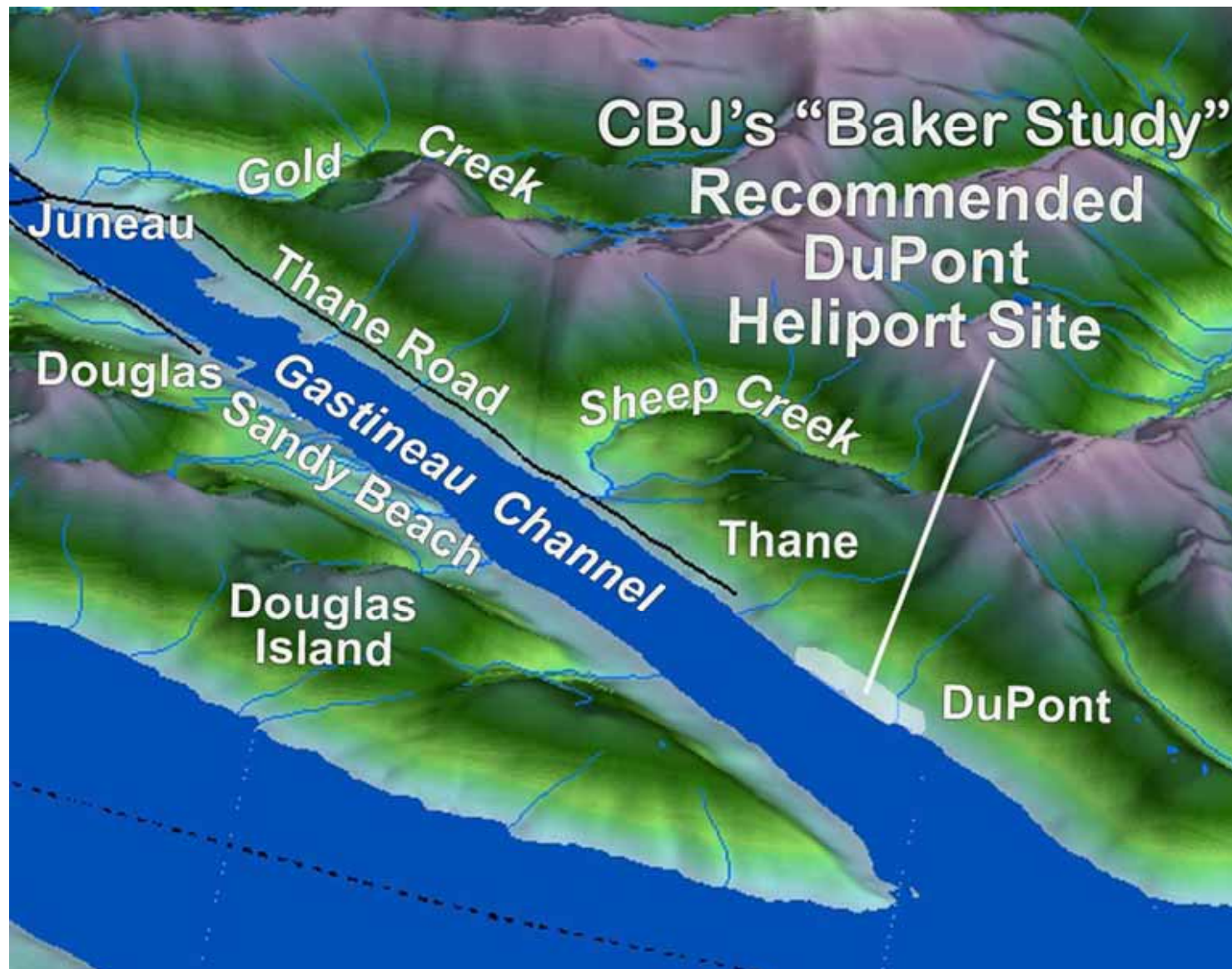


Figure 2-3
Potential DuPont Heliport Sites



Figure 2-4
Tee Harbor to Auke Bay



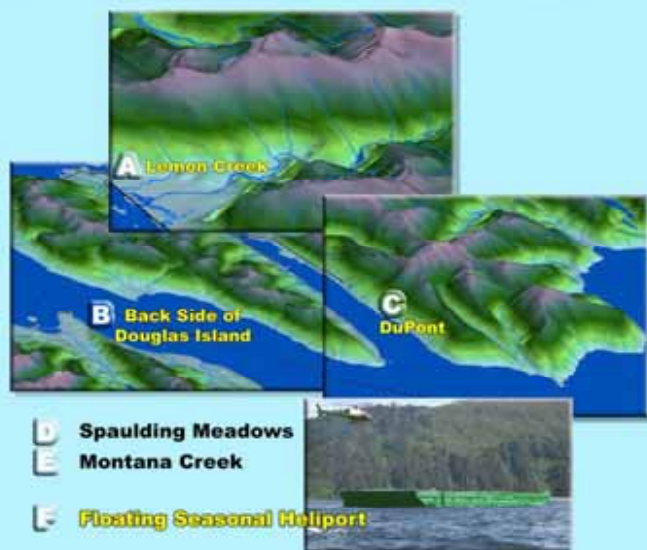
Figure 2-5
Mendenhall Valley to Juneau;
North Douglas



Figure 2-6
Douglas Island and Thane

Proposals Suggested by Business Interests and the Public for Dealing with Helicopter Flight Issues

➤ Select Alternative Heliport Sites.



➤ Implement Quiet Noise Techniques.

- A** Retrofit helicopters

➤ Change Flight Frequency Alternatives.



➤ Use Alternative Transportation.



Figure 2-7
Proposals Suggested by
Business Interests and the
Public for Dealing with
Helicopter Issues

Suggestions for Alternatives

Summary of Documents on Helicopter Flightseeing and Tourism

June 1989 to September 2004



Summary of Documents Produced Regarding Helicopter Flightseeing and Tourism in Juneau, Alaska

Final Report on Ad Hoc Float Plane and Tour Ship Noise Committee (AHFP&TSNC)

Report presented to the CBJs Assembly by the AHFP&TSNC, June 9, 1989, 18 pages.

The AHFP&TSNC was a 13-member committee made up of residents, business operators, and technical representatives charged to “collect data, hold hearings, and issue a report concerning downtown waterfront floatplane and tour ship noise.” Working over a nine-month period from October 1988 through June 1989, the committee reviewed 16 possible options to deal with floatplane noise in Juneau. The report lists each of these options along with the committee’s determination of the positive and negative aspects of each option. This report does not include a recommendation; it is simply a review of the possible options.

Floatplane Noise Study, October 3, 1989.

Prepared by Richard S. Decker, Juneau International Airport, 31 pages.

Juneau International Airport staff conducted this study to measure the maximum levels of floatplane noise in the Gastineau Channel from four observation sites. These noise measurements were intended to provide a factual basis for further discussions of floatplane noise impacts, but did not necessarily reflect the sound levels residents experienced. Maps and measurements of the observations were included.

The study recorded noise measurements of ranging from 35 to 87 decibels. The author noted the following, however: “These measurements do not attempt to determine a personal level of acceptability for floatplane noise levels. These decisions are left for individuals and policymaking bodies to address.”

Fly Neighborly Guide, Revised February 1993.

Published by the Helicopter Association International, 56 pages.

This guide explains the Fly Neighborly Program, a voluntary helicopter noise reduction program organized by the Helicopter Association International. The Fly Neighborly program “offers the technical information necessary for helicopter operators to use current equipment as quietly as practicable, and to communicate to the public their efforts to make helicopter operations compatible with nearly all land uses.” While not specific to CBJ’s situation, this guide presents the basics of the Fly Neighborly program and its objectives.

The objectives of the Fly Neighborly program include the following:

- Pilot and operator awareness of noise levels and community situations.

- Pilot training regarding ways to minimize noise impacts during takeoff, flight, and landing. Noise abatement recommendations from various helicopter manufacturers are also included.
- Flight operations planning to assist in noise abatement, including developing company policies and guidelines.
- Increasing public acceptance of helicopters, including positive public relations, complaint resolution programs, and developing media support.
- Sensitivity to the concerns of the impacted community.

The Fly Neighborly Guide also includes a section explaining the causes of helicopter noise and weather effects on perception of that noise.

An Analysis of Public Opinion and Community Attitudes Toward Tourism and Its Impacts on Juneau's Residents, Summer 1993.

Prepared by The Cromer Group for Wings of Alaska, Temsco Helicopters, and Alaska Travel Adventures, 60 pages.

This document is labeled “confidential,” and information is not for release unless permission is obtained from Metro Intergroup Communications, Inc. and the Cromer Group.

This document reports on the findings of a survey conducted by The Cromer Group in May 1993 regarding opinions of Juneau residents toward tourism.

- On a 10-point scale, where 10 means a particular industry is extremely important to the local economy, tourism received a rating of 8.2, higher than any other industry, including fishing, mining, or logging.
- Eighty-seven percent of respondents said that they would “highly” or “somewhat” recommend that visitors to Juneau take a floatplane flightseeing or helicopter glacier tour. This suggests that residents see these entertainment options as unique to Juneau and an integral part of Juneau’s culture.
- Twenty-nine percent of residents feel that the noise created by tourist helicopters at the downtown waterfront is a major or minor problem, and 26 percent think that floatplane noise at the downtown waterfront is a major or minor problem. Seventy-one percent reported that they have no problem with visitor helicopter noise, and 72 percent reported no problem with floatplane noise at the downtown waterfront.
- Seventy percent of respondents did not feel that sightseeing aircraft noise is important enough to spend taxpayer money to study the problem.

One particularly interesting result was noted. The survey design had half the interviews conducted a few days before the arrival of the first tour ship, with the other half of the interviews conducted the third and fourth day after the arrival of the first ship. Survey results indicated a 2 percent decrease in the number of residents who identified tourist helicopter noise as a major problem during the post-tour ship arrival interviews, compared to the pre-arrival interviews. Similarly, there was a 3 percent decrease in

negative reactions to floatplane flightseeing noise in the same time frame. This suggested to the Cromer Group that the anticipated impact of flightseeing noise might be more problematic than the actual realized noise.

The study also indicated that 4 percent of the post-tour ship arrival interview respondents said they had made a formal complaint about flightseeing noise. However, the Cromer Group found that this 4 percent corresponded with a federal study on aircraft noise which showed that approximately 4 percent of the public remained “seriously annoyed” with aircraft noise, even when the decibel levels were so low that they were equivalent to other ambient background noise. This suggested that approximately 4 percent of the public would always be dissatisfied with any airplane noise, no matter how loud.

Juneau Area Aviation Activities Fly Neighborly Program, draft, December 16, 1993.

Prepared by the Juneau Fly Neighborly Program (JFNP), 17 pages.

This document, published December 16, 1993, describes the JFNP, a self-policing effort among aviation industry operators in Southeast Alaska. It provides a history of aviation in Juneau and the tour industry in Alaska.

Aviation became a primary form of transportation in Alaska during World War II. Before then, primary air traffic was by floatplane to and from the downtown Juneau harbor aerodrome. With the onset of WWII, airfields were constructed across the state as part of the military effort to fortify Alaska and maintain a link to the Soviet Union. The Army Air Corps established a paved runway at Juneau in 1942. The end of the war brought a decline in military activity. Pan American and Pacific Northern Airlines were the primary commercial carriers serving Juneau. Wheel plane traffic increased, though Patrol Bomber-Y floatplanes were still the primary air carriers in Juneau. In 1953, the airport was transferred from federal control to the city of Juneau.

The terminal was built in 1948, expanded in 1957, and remodeled again in 1984. The runway was extended to 2,200 feet in 1961, and jet aircraft began serving the airport in 1962. With the onset of jet traffic, large floatplane and commercial floatplane activity declined. In the late 1970s, tourist-related floatplane activity started to increase.

The Fly Neighborly Task Force was developed to address the negative perception of helicopters and floatplanes by residents directly impacted by their operation. The intent of the JFNP was to discuss issues of flight procedures and to overcome or prevent objections from those affected. The JFNP noted that many helicopter flights (Coast Guard, police, military, private owner, etc.) are unrelated to tourism and, thus, do not fall under this or other noise abatement programs. Since tours are the predominant category of commercial flights, they are the focus of this initial noise abatement program. This report emphasized that the helicopter and fixed-wing tour industries have a bright future if they are able to accommodate community concerns.

The report also included discussions of complaint-reporting procedures, program procedures, pilot training, penalties, and production of annual reports of complaints and actions taken.

Juneau Ad Hoc Noise Abatement Study Committee Final Report, January 1994.

Prepared by the Juneau Ad Hoc Noise Abatement Study Committee for the CBJ Assembly and the People of Juneau, 24 pages.

This report presents the findings of the Juneau Ad Hoc Noise Abatement Study Committee to the CBJ Assembly and the people of Juneau regarding the committee's findings in its investigation and report on noise issues and solutions in CBJ. Most noise concerns were identified as directly related to intensified tourist activity in Juneau. The committee understood that noise regulation policies are primarily intended to protect the health, safety, and welfare of a community. The report covers impacts of noise from many sources, not just flightseeing. It includes recommendations from the committee for ways to reduce noise, committee findings regarding tourism growth in Juneau, examples of community noise ordinances from other cities, and a letter from Charles Kelly regarding the need for planned growth in the Juneau area.

The report also summarized a 1990 memorandum from the CBJ attorney to the mayor and assembly regarding review of Juneau noise control ordinances. This memo addressed jurisdiction in regulation of aircraft noise. It indicated that the use of planning and zoning powers to control floatplane noise would be potentially problematic in terms of regulatory enforcement.

Recommendations by the committee specifically related to flightseeing noise included the following:

- Continuing the noise complaint/report hotline
- Having the city fund a professional noise study
- Continuing to apprise the city of new noise reduction technology and the appropriateness of requiring such technology to be used by aircraft operating in the Juneau area
- Establishing a comprehensive JFNP

A Short-Term Historical Perspective on Tourism in the City of Juneau, December 1995.

Prepared by The Cromer Group, 9 pages.

This study, conducted and published by The Cromer Group, describes the results of two surveys conducted in May/June 1993 and October 1994. A few relevant findings follow:

- Eighty-eight percent of the residents of Juneau said it is important that Juneau maintain its distinction as one of the top ports of call by outside tourists.
- Sixty-seven percent of residents of Juneau thought that Juneau has actually improved over time because of the growth of tourism.
- Seven out of ten respondents did not think the problem of sightseeing aircraft noise in Juneau was important enough to spend taxpayer money to study and/or regulate it.

Citizen Information Gathering Meeting: Assessing the Impacts of Flightseeing Noise, Draft Meeting Summary, September 21, 1999.

Prepared by the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC), November 17, 1999, 8 pages.

The TAC convened a Citizen Information Gathering Meeting on September 21, 1999, to discuss the impacts of flightseeing noise on the citizens of CBJ. Gathering citizens and other stakeholders together at one table was something that had not been done before, and the TAC determined that it would be a positive step toward productive dialogue and finding a package of solutions. The intent was getting people to focus on what they could do about the problem instead of what they could not do. It was attended mainly by people who were bothered by flightseeing noise, and it was not designed to focus on comments from those who were not affected. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as statistically representative of the opinions of all CBJ residents.

The general themes that arose from the meeting include the following:

- Frustrations stemming from expectations of what it means to live in Alaska. For example, the ability to experience solitude away from an urban setting is part of many citizens' reasons for living in Alaska.
- Frustrations stemming from feeling displaced from their daily activities due to impacts of flightseeing noise. People expressed frustration at not being able to be where they wanted to be, including in their homes, because of the noise.
- Feeling like there is no escape from the constant and pervasive noise. Citizens feel like there is nowhere they can go to get away from flightseeing noise. Many people wanted to know when there would be a quiet day or where they could find a no-fly area.
- Impacts on safety. People expressed concern over impacts on safety, growth, wildlife, and quality of life.

This meeting was only one step in a process to bring all stakeholders together to clarify roles and information, identify partnerships and gaps in authority, and craft informed solutions. TAC believed that each of these individuals, groups, or agencies would contribute an important part of the solution. Input gathered at this meeting was to be used to help tour operators and agency representatives identify next steps and potential solutions.

Roundtable Discussion on Flightseeing Noise – Meeting Summary, October 26, 1999.

Prepared by the TAC, 12 pages.

The TAC held a solution-oriented roundtable discussion on flightseeing noise on October 26, 1999. The TAC invited CBJ citizens to interact with a panel that included CBJ's City Manager, flightseeing operators, and representatives from the Forest Service, FAA, and CBJ's Community Development Department. Also available to answer questions were representatives from the U. S. Coast Guard, the Juneau Docks and Harbor Boards, Juneau International Airport, and CBJ's Law Department.

Approximately 70 members of the public attended. Input gathered at the Citizen Information Gathering Meeting on September 21, 1999, was used to help the operators and agency representatives prepare for this meeting, as well as to identify areas where additional information and research were required. The premise was that the process of reaching solutions to flightseeing noise issues must include identifying all players involved in the issue and clearly defining the scope of their specific jurisdictions to help the different parties better understand how to manage and mitigate the impacts of noise from flightseeing operations and create new opportunities for collaboration.

The TAC identified six objectives for the roundtable discussion:

- 1) Bring all of the stakeholders together to work on the impacts of flightseeing noise.
- 2) Review current and potential roles of the various federal and local agencies.
- 3) Identify gaps and overlapping areas of responsibility.
- 4) Obtain feedback on citizen recommendations.
- 5) Identify opportunities for collaboration.
- 6) Focus on what we can do, rather than what we cannot do.

Noise Assessment of Helicopter Glacier Tours, Alaska Region, Tongass National Forest, Juneau Ranger District, November 1999.

Prepared by Ramon E. Nugent, Acentech Inc., for the Forest Service, Juneau Ranger District, 29 pages.

This noise assessment was part of the preparation for the EIS for helicopter landing permits on or adjacent to the Juneau Ice Field. The Forest Service has issued helicopter landing permits for five-year periods since 1984. Three noise-sensitive groups were identified for noise impact assessment: residents, recreationists, and wildlife. Noise from helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft was analyzed at 25 locations, using the metrics bulleted below:

- Sound that increases in level over a short time to a maximum level (L_{max})
- Sound exposure level (SEL)
- Hourly noise level (L_{eq})
- Day-night average sound level (L_{dn})

The noise assessment criteria were based on federal guidelines.

Noise from helicopters was found to be a significant contributor to ambient noise at 15 of the 25 locations, and noise from fixed-wing aircraft was found to be significant at 9 of the 25 locations. Six alternatives were analyzed in this study. They ranged from no permitted landings to 31,000 permitted landings. According to the study, noise from permitted landing tours would be the least for Alternative A, under which no landings would be permitted. Tours without landings would, however, continue to be flown over the area because the Forest Service has no jurisdiction to regulate aircraft over the Ice Field. Helicopters would, therefore, still cause significant noise in the area. Alternative B would

result in the least noise impact, except for Alternative A, the no action alternative. Under this alternative, the Forest Service would issue permits through 2004 based on the forecasted demand for helicopter tours provided by the four helicopter tour companies. There would be time restrictions from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven days per week from early May to late September.

Juneau Flightseeing Operators Results and Action Plan, December 7, 1999.

This brief document, published December 7, 1999, outlined the short-term, mid-term, long-term, and continuing action plans of Juneau flightseeing operators.

Short-term action items included the following:

- Routes/altitude – Flightseeing operators would review existing routes and flight plans to see what else could be done, possibly including rotating routes, looking for new routes, and establishing voluntary low use zones.
- Clarifying operators' ice field landing requests from the Forest Service – All operators agreed to revision of language used in the landing permit request.
- Provide public demonstrations of varying noise levels of different aircraft, flight paths, numbers, and spacing. Findings from this demonstration would be considered in determine operations adjustments for the next season.

Short- to mid-term action items included the following:

- Develop two to four seasonal satellite heliports, preferably one south of town and one north of town. Sites would be operated by the airport and would meet FAA standards and criteria, including the following:
 - Safety
 - Noise abatement
 - Access
 - Economics
 - Environment
- Times of operation – Work with cruise lines to adjust cruise schedules and cruise arrival and departure times.

Mid- to long-term action items included adopting quieter aircraft technology as it becomes available. Continuing actions items included the following:

- Developing flightseeing industry educational and informational materials for public distribution
- No sacrifice of safety for noise abatement
- Use of aircraft with lesser noise footprints

Juneau Helicopter Landings Final Assessment Report, updated April 2000.

**Prepared by Triangle Associates, Inc., for the
Forest Service Tongass National Forest Juneau Ranger District, 18 pages.**

The Forest Service's Juneau Ranger District received applications from four helicopter operators for the 2000 through 2004 five-year permit cycle of landing permits for the Juneau Ice Field Glacier. Residents of CBJ raised objections to the requested 100-percent increase in helicopter landings. In an effort to resolve this conflict, the Forest Service hired Triangle Associates, a facilitation/mediation firm, to determine the necessary steps to negotiate, among all interested parties, a preferred alternative to be included in the landing permit Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Triangle Associates began by conducting interviews to gauge the willingness and ability of the interested parties, which included citizens, environmental groups, businesses, and state and federal agencies, to work together to develop a recommendation to the Forest Service. Triangle summarized these interviews into general statements of the problem from the perspectives of the interested parties. Among citizens of CBJ there is understanding that tourism is a vital part of the Southeast Alaska economy, but they believe that the noise generated by tourist activities is excessive and threatens their quality of life. The business community believes that flightseeing operators are working within the "rights and responsibilities of a free market economy" and that tourism brings a significant amount of money into the area. Their primary interest is in having the appropriate capacity to meet the steady increase in tourism demand. The Forest Service permitting issue is just a small part of these larger concerns. Granting no landing permits would not significantly change the situation, because flights over the glacier and, therefore, flights over neighborhoods (where most of the noise impacts occur) would continue. However, Forest Service decisions regarding granting landing permits play a role in determining the larger tourism policy for the region.

There are three options for moving forward. The first is for the Forest Service to continue the current helicopter landing permit process. The second option is to involve interested parties in negotiation to develop a recommendation focusing specifically on the number of landings to be permitted. The third option, which arose out of the interviews, is to form a partnership between CBJ and the Forest Service to address broader noise impacts to the region. This would include addressing some issues that are not under Forest Service jurisdiction, such as negotiation among multiple interested parties. The Forest Service permit recommendation would be developed in the context of a larger package of solutions to the noise problem. The advantages and disadvantages of each of these options are discussed in the report. Triangle then proposed that the negotiation team work on the second and third options, and discussed the phases in the negotiation process.

A brief discussion of the range of issues Triangle identified during the assessment included economic, noise, authority/local control, helicopter landing sites, quality of life, and timing issues. Triangle included approaches to resolution, including more research to define the problem, limiting flightseeing, increasing regulations, possibilities for voluntary compliance, operator incentives, and agency authorities.

Noise Impacts of Tourist Activities on the CBJ and on Forest Service Lands: Are Mediated Negotiations Feasible? June 2000. Assessment Report Supplements, May 2000

By Triangle Associates, Inc., 12 pages.

This report by Triangle Associates is an addendum to the April 2000 report to the Forest Service, *Juneau Helicopter Landings*. Following that report, the Juneau Ranger District and the CBJ asked Triangle to assess specifically whether citizen groups would be willing to participate in mediated negotiations and whether they would be able to structure themselves into caucuses to make that participation possible and effective. This report further detailed the steps required to engage the interested parties in negotiations. Triangle found that citizen groups could form caucuses, communicate effectively, and participate in formal negotiations; to be effective and reach a collaborative long-term solution, however, they would have to help develop the structure and format of the negotiations. Triangle's final recommendation was that "the Forest Service and the CBJ convene an interim negotiation group during the summer of 2000... to work with a neutral mediator to develop and agree on a structure, process, and a common information base for negotiations."

Triangle then gave background information on the situation that led to it undertaking this report. It discovered during its initial interviews that the Forest Service helicopter landings were part of a larger flightseeing noise issue that could not effectively be resolved outside of the context of that larger issue. Triangle found that all the parties they interviewed, except environmental groups (which were interested in working on developing the framework for negotiations but did not want to make a final decision on participation) were willing to help develop the structure for a mediated negotiation process. The final decision on whether or not to undertake negotiation would be made in the fall. While obstacles remained, Triangle's professional opinion was that citizens and other interest groups were able and willing to help resolve issues by working together.

Triangle recommended four "next steps" for CBJ and the Forest Service to undertake:

- Obtain a third, preferably neutral, financial sponsor. Triangle suggested approaching the Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution.
- Revisit interested parties to identify further interests, needs, and conditions of participation. Groups could decide whether they should be in the negotiation group, serve on a panel as technical specialists, or observe the negotiation process.
- Develop a common base of information, including compiling data and existing research and determining possible expert panels to answer questions as needed.
- Hold two or three organizational gatherings with the potential negotiation team members during the summer to agree on the framework and information base.

A decision on whether to begin a mediated negotiation process was to be made in the late summer or early fall of 2000.

Juneau Flightseeing Noise Mediation Design Phase Final Assessment Report, December 13, 2000.

Prepared by Triangle Associates, Inc., for the Forest Service, in partnership with the CBJ, and the Morris K. Udall Foundation U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, 17 pages.

This document, published December 13, 2000, explains the work of the noise mediation design team, which consisted of representatives from nine interest groups. The group attempted to determine if mediation would be helpful in resolving issues related to flightseeing noise. The team met four times from October 27 to December 13, 2000. Their goals were as follows:

- Develop a common information base on issues related to flightseeing noise.
- Establish a framework of issues for potential negotiation by a future mediation team.
- Develop ground rules for that potential mediation.
- Decide whether or not it would be possible to proceed to mediation under current conditions.

The first step was establishing and agreeing on ground rules. Three issues could not be resolved:

- Whether the meetings would be open to the public
- Whether the sessions would be recorded on audio tape
- Who would speak for the process to the media

The biggest concern regarding these issues was team members' fears of being misquoted, misinterpreted, or sued because of what they said in discussions. The group ultimately decided it could not proceed unless it reached agreement on the ground rules.

Four options remained:

- Accept the impasse, and end efforts to collaborate on flightseeing solutions.
- Try again to reach consensus on the ground rules.
- Modify the team membership to include only those parties that agreed on the ground rules and represented needed interests.
- Replace the mediation process with a facilitated public process.

The team members were asked to consider these options and other potential options with their caucuses and report back to the mediator.

Flightseeing Noise in Juneau: Mitigation Options and Recommendations Under Existing Law, April 23, 2001.

Report prepared for Mayor Smith and Assembly Members by Rick Durden, Tolley, VandenBosch, Korolewicz & Brengle, P.C., 15 pages.

Rick Durden, an attorney hired by the CBJ to assess flightseeing noise mitigation options in light of existing regulations and case law on related issues, submitted this report, published April 23, 2001, to the mayor and assembly members of Juneau. The issue at hand was what legal recourse CBJ had to compel or encourage flightseeing noise reduction in residential areas. Any resolution to the problem of flightseeing noise must balance the income tourist dollars bring to the area and the annoyance and disruption it creates in the lives of residents. Durden pointed out that two noise studies have shown “that the noise levels in the valley and over the Channel are well below the standards established as a health hazard or incompatible with housing.” Therefore, “to the extent they are uncomfortable or an aggravation, the level of aggravation is purely subjective.” The lack of objective guidelines makes it difficult for flight operators to develop a useful strategy to reduce noise further.

Durden reviewed case law to establish the historical development of aircraft noise law, statutes and regulations, and federal preemption and control of aircraft noise. He concluded that solutions such as a ban on flightseeing flights, ordinances to reduce the number of flights, or curfews limiting the time of flights would probably not stand up under litigation. The report detailed potential solutions to helicopter noise and seaplane noise, including Fly Neighborly programs, new technology, legislation, segregation, and noise ordinances.

As his conclusion on addressing noise issues for both types of flights, Durden recommended that CBJ reach a noise reduction operating agreement with the flight operators. This would be a mutually enforceable contract that would avoid the pitfalls presented above in creating regulations or legislation. Regarding helicopters, he pointed out that while controlling noise “via ordinance or zoning may be extremely difficult, it can be done by agreement.” The details of this agreement could include establishing one or two heliports away from the city and designing departure and arrival routes that moved away from residences as much as possible. For flightseeing, his recommendation was that CBJ use its probable authority to enforce zoning regulations on the Channel to encourage mutually beneficial negotiations between the city and fixed-wing flight operators.

Draft Final CBJ Flightseeing Noise Assessment, January 25, 2001.

Prepared by Michael Baker Jr., Inc., and BridgeNet International SWCA, 111 pages.

CBJ hired Michael Baker, Jr., Inc. (Baker) and BridgeNet International SWCA to conduct a comprehensive flightseeing noise assessment. The document, published January 25, 2001, presents the findings of the noise level evaluation and analysis conducted for CBJ, and it presents potential mitigation options to reduce the noise impacts associated with flightseeing activities. Noise measurements were taken between July 29 and September 1, 2000, at 37 sites in the CBJ area. For various reasons detailed

in the report, the FAA's criteria on noise levels do not readily apply to the flightseeing noise situation in CBJ. Therefore, Baker and BridgeNet staff developed modified methodologies and noise metrics for this analysis. The authors present background information on characteristics of sound, scales of rating sound, and effects of sound on people, along with details of their methodology. Measurement results are included, and mitigation options are discussed. Recommended mitigation options include the following:

- New aircraft and helicopter technology
- Evaluation and implementation of alternative flight paths and procedures, including improved weather reporting, incentives for preferred flight path compliance, altitude adjustment for floatplane departures, and propeller pitch setting adjustments
- Development of satellite heliports
- "Fly Quiet" programs and seasonal noise monitoring
- Use of a mediation process for implementation of mitigation options

Alternative Heliport Site Analysis for the CBJ, September 24, 2001.

Report prepared for the CBJ by the Michael Baker Corporation and BridgeNet International, 127 pages.

The findings of Michael Baker Jr., Inc. (Baker), hired by CBJ, are contained in this document, published September 24, 2001. Mr. Baker evaluated and recommended alternative heliport sites as a way to reduce the impact of flightseeing noise in Juneau. Baker staff, in conjunction with CBJ, developed a set of screening criteria (further detailed in the report) that focused on safety, noise, and impacts to neighborhoods for the evaluation of potential sites. These criteria were presented at a public meeting in May 2001, and public comment was invited. After revision to incorporate comments made by the community and CBJ staff, the criteria were presented to the public. Baker staff then worked with the Forest Service to use helicopter landing information as part of a destination-based analysis of potential sites.

In developing the recommendations in this report, Baker staff started with one basic requirement: unless alternate heliports could offer dramatic reductions in flightseeing noise, they were not worth pursuing. The Baker Study writers' stance in researching alternate sites was that a solution resulting in reduction in flightseeing noise for 1,000 people by increasing noise for 600 people was not a solution at all. The writers concluded that recommendations in this report would have the potential to reduce or eliminate flightseeing noise impacts for most residents of the borough. Baker staff also determined that the goal of relieving the maximum number of homes from flightseeing noise would be best served by having two heliport sites, one to the north and one to the south.

Baker staff considered 17 sites in the analysis; two were ultimately recommended as the ones that would reduce the most flightseeing noise for CBJ residents: Montana Creek for the north, and Dupont for the south. They also determined that these sites would have the added benefit of clearing Juneau airspace by increasing the separation between flightseeing traffic and other general aviation and jet traffic. Baker staff also indicated

that using more remote locations would protect highly populated areas in the unlikely event of an air disaster.

The report writers detail their criteria and methodology, provide background information on the companies and flight lines the Forest Service permits for glacier landings, discuss the noise corridors he developed for quantifying comparisons between the sites, and outline the methods used for sound modeling and monitoring. Juneau heliport management and facility requirements, general and specific flight safety requirements, and summaries of alternate heliport sites are also included.

Members of the panel made presentations, and then there was a question and answer session. Topics that were covered in this session included the following:

- Airspace control
- Forest Service EIS
- Noise ordinances
- Quiet technology
- Operator recommendations
- Taxes on flightseeing operations

Juneau Tourism Management Plan Final Draft, April 2002.

Prepared for the CBJ by Egret Communications/ARA Consulting, 148 pages.

Egret Communications and ARA Consulting prepared this report for CBJ to address the need for increased tourism growth management planning in the borough area. Tourism increased an average of 10.5 percent per year between 1990 and 2000. The Juneau infrastructure is not prepared for this type of growth to continue. The plan includes demographic details of CBJ tourists and focuses primarily on the following:

- Reducing impacts of tourism on the natural environment and residents of the CBJ
- Creating a more supportive tourism business environment
- Improving product quality and visitor experience
- Developing a partnership between residents and local businesses to manage tourism for success

The plan details recommendations for the Juneau Tourism Partnership (JTP), its roles and functions, strategies for managing tourism related impacts, and development of the Juneau tourist experience product, including marketing and monitoring plan performance and impacts.

While helicopter and fixed-wing flightseeing is only a part of Juneau's overall tourism environment, managing the noise associated with these activities is a significant goal of the tourism management plan. The authors reported that flightseeing noise bothers a majority of CBJ residents, but that residents strongly believe that flightseeing activities should not be eliminated from the Juneau tourism experience. Recommendations regarding flightseeing activities in this plan included the following:

- Development of alternate heliports for flightseeing, to be implemented in two phases, beginning with one to the south, followed by one to the north.
- Collaboration between CBJ and Wings of Alaska to reduce floatplane noise in the Gastineau Channel. The primary course of action recommended was investment in quieter floatplane technology, with possible further actions to be evaluated after that.

Helicopter Landing Tours on the Juneau Ice Field 2003-2007, Final EIS Record of Decision. April 2002.

Forest Service, Juneau Ranger District, Tongass National Forest, 35 pages.

This EIS documented the environmental analysis undertaken to assist the Forest Service in deciding how many permits to issue for helicopter landings on the Juneau Ice Field from 2003 through 2007. The considered alternatives included the following:

- Variations on the numbers of landings, from permitting no landings to permitting a 10 percent increase in landings (over 1999 levels) for each year from 2003 through 2007
- Variations in the times of day and days of the week on which landings may occur, including restricting weekend and holiday landings
- Permitting additional landing sites
- Permitting motorized snow vehicle tours

In making the permitting decision, the four major issues considered were 1) noise impacts to residents, 2) noise impacts to recreationists, 3) noise impacts to wildlife, and 4) impacts in new areas. According to the EIS, “Noise impacts on residents is the issue that has been given the most attention during this. . . process.” The Forest Service recognized that “helicopter landing tours are only a part of the noise impact problem. Even if no landings were allowed on the ice field, there would still be a large number of flightseeing trips over the ice field.” Also included was the rationale for the alternative selected and a discussion of alternatives that were eliminated from detailed study.

The selected alternative is “a compromise that neither provides all the landings that are desired nor eliminates all the noise problems.” According to the EIS schedule, an initial 19,039 permits would be issued for 2003 and 2004, with a 5 percent increase each year thereafter, resulting in 22,040 permits issued in 2007. It allows landings from 8:30 am to 8:00 pm seven days per week from approximately May 1 through September 30, adds only one additional landing site (Death Valley), and does not permit motorized snow vehicle tours on the glacier. The report states that this moderate increase in helicopter landing permits was made with the following understanding: “Once the CBJ determines the appropriate measures to address the helicopter noise issue, including the construction of one or more heliports, it may be necessary to amend this decision.”

***Resolution of the CBJ, Alaska, Serial Number 2170.
August 5, 2002, 6 pages.***

This resolution adopted CBJ's tourism management policies and contained several policies on flightseeing noise issues. Included in this resolution was the following statement: "It is the policy of the CBJ to work with residents, operators and appropriate government agencies to implement a phased development of alternative heliports to accommodate helicopter flightseeing operations. The manager shall work with the JTP to consider satellite heliports. The CBJ supports the growth of our flightseeing businesses to best serve visitors from all over the world who come seeking this unique experience. At the same time, we are committed to resolving the noise impacts that local residents experience. It is the policy of the CBJ to explore significant noise reduction possibilities through the use of quiet technology and offer workable solutions for both operators and residents alike." Offering workable solutions would include "explor[ing] the establishment of a noise abatement program utilizing [quiet] technology for use on fixed-wing aircraft..." The policy stated that the "objective is to make Juneau a better place to live, work, and visit."

Juneau Tourism Community Opinion Survey Series, November 2002.

Prepared for the CBJ by the McDowell Group, Inc., 24 pages.

This survey was undertaken in October 2002. The survey consisted of phone calls to randomly selected Juneau households. Participants were asked a series of questions regarding their opinions and perceptions of the impacts of tourism in Juneau. The maximum margin of error was ± 4.5 percent. When asked about the overall tourism impact on Juneau households, 40 percent of respondents said tourism has a positive impact, compared with 29 percent in 1998 and 34 percent in 1995. Thirty-seven percent said it has both positive and negative impacts; 6 percent said it had negative impacts; and 15 percent said it has no impact at all. Results of questions relating to flightseeing are as follows:

When asked how their household was impacted by helicopter noise, 13 percent said very affected, 9 percent said affected, 22 percent said somewhat affected, and 56 percent said not at all affected. When comparing perception of impacts by neighborhood, the percentage of people responding that they were affected or somewhat affected by helicopter noise was 31 percent in Salmon, Lemon, and Switzer Creeks; 26 percent in North Douglas; 25 percent in Douglas/W. Juneau; 21 percent in W. Mendenhall Valley/out the road; 19 percent in East Mendenhall Valley; and 19 percent in downtown/Thane. When asked to compare changes in the impact of helicopter noise from 2001 to 2002, 4 percent said it was very increased, 13 percent said somewhat increased, 45 percent said no change, 14 percent said somewhat reduced, 2 percent said very reduced, and 21 percent did not know or did not notice. Comparing impacts of helicopter noise in 2001 to 2002 by neighborhood, the percentage of residents responding "somewhat increased" or "very increased" was 35 percent in Salmon, Lemon, and Switzer Creeks; 20 percent in W. Mendenhall Valley/out the road; 15 percent in Douglas/W. Juneau; 13 percent in East Mendenhall Valley; 13 percent in North Douglas; and 12 percent in downtown/Thane. When asked about future levels of tourism in terms

of impact on the community, 21 percent said helicopter flightseeing could be increased, 48 percent said it could be maintained at the current level, 23 percent said it could be decreased, and 7 percent did not know.

Divided by neighborhood, the following percentages of respondents said levels could be increased or decreased: 16/28 (increase/decrease) in downtown/Thane; 25/23 in Douglas/W. Juneau; 17/35 in Salmon, Lemon, and Switzer Creeks; 28/19 in East Mendenhall Valley; 17/17 in North Douglas; and 11/25 in West Mendenhall Valley/out the road.

Resolution of the CBJ, Alaska, Serial Number 2215. June 9, 2003, 3 pages.

The Juneau Assembly passed this resolution to adopt the Capital Improvement Program, which established priorities for fiscal years 2004 through 2009. It included an allocation of \$510,000 for alternate heliports/noise abatement projects in fiscal year 2004.

Ordinance of the CBJ, Alaska, Serial Number 2004-14(O). September 27, 2004, 1 page.

The Juneau Assembly passed this ordinance transferring \$464,000 to the city manager for the Noise Abatement Loan Program. The funds came from marine passenger fees.

Methods for Reaching Remote Sites



Introduction

This report presents a brief overview of alternative methods for gaining access to remote sites around the world. The following sections present brief descriptions and technical considerations of five access options: two railway types (funicular and cog), two aerial lift options (aerial trams and gondolas), and one over-snow option (snowcoaches).

Some examples of costs associated with system implementation are also provided. Cost examples were drawn from the Estes Valley Transportation Alternatives Study, which was prepared from 2000 to 2003 for the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Town of Estes Park, and Larimer County by a team that included Felsburg Holt & Ullevig, URS Corporation, Design Studios West, Entranco, and Hammer Siler George Associates. Additional cost estimates were drawn from the 2003 Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan for Parklands in Southwestern Marin (Passenger Ropeway Technical Review), prepared by SE Group. These cost values should not be viewed as estimates of the price tag for implementing any of these alternatives in the Juneau area. Instead, they may serve as an indicator of the costs of the different methods, relative to each other.

Funicular Railway

A funicular, also called funicular railway or inclined railway, is a system in which cables attach to a tram-like vehicle on rails to move it up and down a very steep slope. Funicular means relating to or operated by a rope or cable. A funicular railway is pulled by a moving cable and has two counterbalanced cars, one ascending and one descending. The cars may travel on two tracks or on one track that splits where the cars pass in the middle of the route. The cables, driven by a power unit at the top or bottom of the incline, pull cars uphill and guide their descent.

Typically, a funicular route has a steep, relatively uniform gradient, which differentiates the funicular from a cog or cable railway. In addition, the cars of a funicular usually are permanently attached at the end(s) of the cable, whereas the cars on a cable railway (i.e., cable cars, as in San Francisco) can usually detach and reattach to the cable during normal operation. The vehicle is often specially designed for the particular incline, so that seats and/or floors remain roughly horizontal. Funicular railways are well suited for short, steep climbs, while cog railways are better for long distances with multiple curves.

The advantages of funicular railways include their high capacity, easy passenger access, and stability in adverse weather conditions. Disadvantages include high capital and installation costs, as well as ground disturbance associated with installation. Funicular railways can operate on grades exceeding 100 percent (45°), and can carry up to 3,000 passengers per hour, depending on travel distance and vehicle capacity. The cost estimate for Estes Park included \$4.2 to \$6.9 million per mile for the guideway and \$0.5 to \$1.0 million per vehicle. The Marin study indicated that costs were too variable to characterize.

EXAMPLES:



**The Saint Joan and Santa Cova funicular railways
at Montserrat, near Barcelona, Spain:**
[http://www.cremallerademontserrat.com/funiculars/
default_en.asp](http://www.cremallerademontserrat.com/funiculars/default_en.asp)



Cairn Gorm, Scotland:
<http://www.funimag.com/funimag22/CairnGorm01.htm>



Katoomba Scenic Railway, Blue Mountains, New South Wales, Australia:
<http://infobluemountains.net.au/rail/ksr/Default.htm>



(maximum grade of 122 percent!)

Cog Railway

A cog railway, or rack-and-pinion railway, is a mountain railway with a special center rack rail mounted in the middle of the sleepers between the regular rails. Trains are fitted with cog wheels that mesh into the rack rail, allowing travel up and down steep inclines. Many of the rack systems in operation today use a combination of rack and standard rails to reach higher speeds. Rack railroads cannot operate much higher than 25 mph without risking dislodgement. A typical average operating speed for a rack railroad is 10 miles per hour (mph).

Another variant is the Fell mountain railway system or Fell incline railway system. This system employs a raised center rail between the two main rails to provide the extra traction and braking needed for steep grade sections. Trains are propelled and braked by wheels pressed horizontally onto the center rail by springs, as well as by the standard vertical running wheels. These horizontal wheels may be fitted to a specially designed Fell engine, or to self-propelled railcars.

On a rack-only railroad, locomotives always push the passenger cars from behind. This enhances safety because the locomotive is fitted with powerful brakes that often include hooks or clamps that grip the rack rail solidly. Some locomotives are fitted with automatic brakes that apply if the speed gets too high, preventing runaways. Often the locomotive is not coupled to the train, because gravity will always pull the passenger car down against the locomotive.

The advantages of cog railways include the ability to travel over varying terrain with multiple curves. Disadvantages include high capital and installation costs, ground disturbance associated with installation, comparatively slow travel speeds, and limited ability to travel up and down steep grades. Cog railways can operate on grades of 12 to 25 percent and can carry 300 to 1,200 passengers per hour. The cost estimate for Estes Park included \$2.5 to \$10 million per mile for the guideway and \$4.5 to \$5.5 million for vehicles. The Marin study did not address cog railways.

EXAMPLES:



The rack railway at Montserrat, near Barcelona, Spain:
http://www.cremallerademontserrat.com/cremallera/default_en.asp



The Corcovado Train, Rio Di Janerio, Brazil:
<http://www.corcovado.com.br/principal.asp?lingua=English>



The Snowdon Mountain Railway, near Llanberis, Wales:
<http://www.snowdonrailway.co.uk/technical.html>

Gondola Lift

A gondola lift is a type of aerial lift, often called a cable car, which consists of a continuously circulating loop of steel cable that is strung between two stations, preferably over intermediate supporting towers. The cable is driven by a bullwheel in the terminal, which is usually powered by an electric engine. Relatively small passenger cabins are spaced along the cable. In many ways, a gondola lift operates like a chairlift at a ski area, substituting enclosed passenger cabins for open chairs.

In some systems, the passenger cabins, which can hold from 4 to 14 people, are connected to the cable by spring-loaded grips. These grips enable the cabin to be

detached from the moving cable and slowed down in the terminals, allowing passengers to board and disembark. Cabins are driven through the terminals either by rotating tires, or by a chain system. To be accelerated to and decelerated from line speed, cabins are driven along by progressively faster (or slower) rotating tires until they reach terminal or line speed.

In other systems, the cable intermittently slows down to allow passengers to enter and leave the cabins at the stations and to allow people in the cars along the route to take photographs.

The advantages of gondola lifts include their high capacity and steady traffic flow. Disadvantages include their susceptibility to wind disturbance and their need for a relatively high number of towers. Gondola lifts can operate on grades of 60 to 100 percent and can carry up to 3,000 passengers per hour. The cost estimate for Estes Park included \$0.4 to \$0.7 million for equipment and towers, \$25,000 to \$40,000 per vehicle, and \$10,000 to \$20,000 for stations. The Marin estimate was \$900 to \$1,200 per foot of slope distance.

EXAMPLES:



Taronga Park Zoo “Sky Safari,”
Sydney, Australia: www.zoo.nsw.gov.au



Heights of Abraham, Derbyshire, England:
<http://www.heights-of-abraham.co.uk/>



Skyline Gondola, Queenstown, New Zealand:
<http://www.skyline.co.nz/queenstown/gondola/>



Heights of Abraham, Derbyshire, England: <http://www.heights-of-abraham.co.uk/>



Sulphur Mountain Gondola, Banff, Canada:
<http://www.banffgondola.com/default.htm>



Tochal Ski Complex, Iran:

http://www.tochalcomplex.com/new/fa/gallery_inside.asp

The Tochal Tele-cabin starts from metropolitan Tehran and ends at the Tochal Ski Resort, 3,900 meters (12,800 feet) high. It has seven stations and is one of the longest in the world.

Aerial Tramway

An aerial tramway is a type of aerial lift, sometimes called a cable car and frequently incorrectly referred to as a gondola. In an aerial tramway system, passenger cabins are permanently attached to a moving cable and are supported by one or more additional cables. The passenger cabins are attached at opposite points on the moving cable and are spaced so that when one cabin is in the upper terminal, the other is in the lower terminal.

An aerial tramway differs from a gondola lift by having larger cabins, in some cases able to carry more than 100 people. In addition, because the cabins are permanently attached to the drive cable, the cable must come to a complete stop to allow passengers to enter and leave. In a gondola lift system, the cable keeps moving while the cabins detach to allow passenger access.

The advantages of aerial tramways include the need for few cabins and relatively few towers. Disadvantages include their susceptibility to wind disturbance and their limited hourly capacity. Aerial tramways can operate on grades of 16 to 90 percent and can carry 1,050 passengers per hour (the latter figure comes from the Mt. Roberts tramway in Juneau). The cost estimate for Estes Park included \$5.9 to \$9.6 million for towers and terminals and \$3.2 to \$4.2 million for vehicles and equipment. The Marin estimate was \$1,000 to \$2,500 per foot of slope distance.

EXAMPLES:



Grouse Mountain Skyride, Vancouver, Canada:

<http://www.grousemountain.com/grousemountain-skyride.cfm>



Katoomba Scenic Skyway, Blue Mountains, Australia:

http://www.scenicworld.com.au/attractions_skyway.asp



**Palm Springs Aerial Tram,
California:**
<http://www.pstramway.org/>



Mount Roberts Tramway, Juneau:
<http://www.alaska.net/~junotram/>

Snowcoaches

Snowcoaches are over-the-snow vehicles capable of carrying 8 to more than 30 passengers. They have been used extensively at the Columbia Ice Field in the Canadian Rockies and at Yellowstone National Park. Smaller snowcoaches are also in service at ski resorts elsewhere in the United States and abroad. Snowcoach operation would require construction of an access road for vehicle transport and maintenance. No estimates were found for the cost of purchasing and maintaining a fleet of snowcoaches, or for constructing an access road.

EXAMPLES:



Columbia Ice Field, Banff and Jasper National Parks, Canada:
<http://www.columbiaicefield.com/>



Yellowstone National Park, West Yellowstone, Montana:
<http://www.yellowstonesnowcoaches.com/>



Yellowstone National Park, West Yellowstone, Montana:
<http://www.yellowstonevacations.com/snowcoaches.asp/>

Public Meeting Brochure



Background Information

Helicopter tours provide a popular shore excursion for cruise ship visitors to Juneau. Thousands of helicopter arrivals and departures take place during the approximately 5-month cruise ship season. A number of previous studies have been conducted to identify and propose mitigation for the impacts of helicopter noise. FHWA initiated a study effort to assess public opinion. This study used information collected previously and gathered additional information by interviewing members of the public and the business community.



Helicopter Flightseeing Open House

April 18, 2006 – 5pm to 8pm
Egan Room, Centennial Hall

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) seeks public comments on helicopter flightseeing in Juneau. FHWA has scheduled a public meeting on April 18th from 5:00pm to 8:00pm in the Egan Room at Centennial Hall. The purpose of this open-house style meeting is to provide the public with an opportunity to view the materials developed during a study effort conducted from the spring of 2005 to the present. This meeting will provide a forum for discussions among individuals and the following agencies and groups:

FHWA
USDA Forest Service
City and Borough of Juneau Baker Study
Representatives
Charter Helicopter Operators
Tour Ship Representatives
Collaboration Juneau



Open House Purpose

The study effort conducted engaged the public, business community, cruise ship industry, aviation industry, and other related entities in an effort to document individuals' and businesses' perceptions of the effects associated with charter helicopters on the community of Juneau. This open house is designed to provide the public with an opportunity to discuss their perception of impacts from charter helicopters; revisit and discuss previous studies by other local, state, and federal agencies; recommend any additional ideas on the issue of charter helicopters; and express individual opinions.

The following materials will be available:

- A summary of the interviews conducted;
- A chronological summary of documents from all agencies produced regarding charter helicopter flightseeing; and
- A review of methods used around the world to transport tourists to remote sites.



Open House Format

FHWA will give a brief summary presentation on the process used and the avenues explored to solicit public opinion on charter helicopter impacts. An information table will have copies of all materials local, state, and federal agencies developed before this current effort and the materials developed over the course of this study will also be available.

Each table will have a flip chart, and representatives at each table will record comments. In addition, a court recorder will be available to take oral opinions/testimony.



CBJ's "Baker Study" Sites

